Commentary on 1 Maccabees By Rabanus Maurus

Translated by John Litteral

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Introduction

This translation of the commentary by Rabanus on 1 Maccabees is the first ever English translation as far as I am aware of. Rabanus is the first person to write a commentary on 1 Maccabees. Many of the commentaries by Rabanus have not been translated into English at this point. This English translation comes from the Patrologia Latina 109.

Below is an overview on the life and works of Rabanus Maurus that I gleaned from the prologue of volume 107 of the Patrologia Latina, pages 1-40.

Early life

RABANUS, so called by his native name, received another name, MAURUS, from his teacher Alcuin, as he himself testifies in the preface to the commentaries on the Kings, where he says that in those places which he explains himself, he marked the letter M in the margin, expressing the name Maurus: "which my master, Albinus of blessed memory, gave to me." Indeed, in that age, it had become customary among learned men living in these parts, that besides their family name, which was often somewhat harsh in sound, they would adopt another name from Latin or Greek, rarely from Hebrew, seeking the smoothness of a more refined language…

It is clear that he was a Frank, that is, born in eastern France, not indeed at Fulda, but at Mainz. Listen to Rabanus himself, offering his books on the Cross to the pope in the person of Alcuin, and speaking therefore of himself: "He himself is of Frankish descent, and an inhabitant of the forest of Bochonia," etc. For he was a monk at Fulda, which is a town situated in Bochonia; but he was not born there, but in the city of Mainz, as he himself sings in the caption: "Indeed, I was born in this city, and baptized at the holy font: After this, I learned sacred doctrine at Fulda."… Nevertheless, it is certain that Rabanus was born of illustrious lineage, as he had a brother Tutin, a man of the highest nobility,… Rabanus was born around the year 776. Certainly, he began to write two books on the praises of the Holy Cross before the year 810, when he had completed

six lustra, that is, thirty years… He was a monk of Fulda from boyhood… While Rabanus was teaching literature, the Fulda academy enjoyed great renown, abounding then in books of all disciplines and producing illustrious teachers for the Christian world…

So great was his love for literature that neither the labor of teaching nor the duties of regular life, nor various occupations, nor even illness could draw him away from his devotion to writing. Indeed, he was easily inclined to obey the wishes of his friends; his sole concern was to be able to benefit the Church of Christ and the salvation of others…

His love of the Church Fathers

Appointed head of the Fulda academy, although he was occupied with regular trainings and instructing the youth, he nevertheless did not cease from composing commentaries from the opinions of the Fathers, as his letter to Haistulf, Bishop of Mainz, attests, regarding his exposition of Matthew: “Therefore, intent on reading these, as much as the countless bonds of monastic service allowed me, and for the nourishment of the young—which brings us no small annoyance and does injury to reading—I myself, being both author and scribe, took care to record on a slip of paper what they had expounded, either in their own words or, for brevity’s sake, in mine.” He imitated the Venerable Bede, whose words are almost the same, as related in his Eulogy from the previous century. Having become abbot, he cultivated the same study, although living in deserted places and detained by great occupations, by which he was compelled daily to serve and provide necessities for the servants of Christ living under the Rule of St. Benedict. He had no leisure to fully examine the sayings of the Fathers, as he writes in his letter to Freculf, Bishop of Lisieux in Gaul, to whom he sent his exposition of Leviticus; he had said the same in a letter to him when he sent his explanation of Genesis… The extent of his reverence for the holy Fathers is shown by all his works, which he composed from their opinions, with their names placed in the margin: “So that I may not be accused of stealing the sayings of the elders and composing them as if they were my own,” he

says in the preface to the Gospel of Matthew. He did this, as he himself says, for the benefit of others: “So that the poor reader who does not have an abundance of books, or who cannot examine the deep meanings of the Fathers in many works, may at least find sufficiency for his need here.” No one can deny that this was done with the best intention, who considers the scarcity of books as it was at that time. For outside the monasteries, there were hardly any libraries, not even in most cathedral churches, as Freculf testifies about his own church of Lisieux in his letter to Abbot, from whom he requested Commentaries on the Pentateuch composed from the sayings of the Fathers: “Therefore, if you attempt to offer any excuses to avoid undertaking a work of such size and immense labor, and try to answer why I do not examine by my own effort those books from which I command these things to be made, and gather whatever I please by picking them out, let the vigilance of your charity consider that we have no abundance of books to do this, even if the smallness of our dull mind were vigorous: for in the bishopric entrusted to our insignificance, I do not even find the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, much less their expositions.”…

Death

In the year 856, it is recorded in the Annals of Fulda, in the month of February, on the fourth day of the month, Archbishop Rabanus of the Church of Mainz died, having served as bishop for 9 years, one month, and four days…

The commentaries by Rabanus

Made abbot in the year 822, Rabanus dedicated Commentaries on **Matthew** and certain Homilies to Haistulf, who died in the year 826. Around the year 830, he submitted an Explanation of the **Octateuch** to Freculf, bishop of Lisieux in Gaul, who obtained it from him through letters and requests… At about the same time, he expounded the Book of **Joshua** at the request of Frederick, Bishop of Utrecht on the Rhine, who was killed in the year 834, preceded by a memorial letter, a fragment of which was related by Henschenius, received from Peter Franscisco Chiffletius… along with the Commentary itself divided into three books, which does not exist in the published editions. Shortly after, at the request of Humbert, Bishop of Würzburg, he explained the Books of

Judges and **Ruth**; then the Books of **Kings** at the request of Hilduin, abbot: which exposition he offered to Louis the Pious at Fulda; and not long after, he sent commentaries on the books of **Chronicles** to King Louis. Around the year 836, he dedicated his writing on the books of **Judith** and **Esther** to Monarch Judith, after she had defeated her enemies to a considerable extent, whose preface, not yet published in print, which we received through the kindness of the same learned man Peter Franscisco Chiffletius, is to be rendered here from the Benignian and Fontan manuscripts. Afterwards, he dedicated his explanation of the Books of **Maccabees** to Gerold, Archdeacon of the palace of Emperor Louis, before the year 840, then the Exposition on **Wisdom** and **Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)** to Olgar, Archbishop of Mainz; and he wrote a letter to Noting, Bishop of Verona, before the death of Emperor Louis. After the year 840, with Louis the Pious dead, he offered the Books on **Jeremiah** to Emperor Lothair: which Hartmot, dean of Saint Gall, took care to have written, as Ratpert reports in chapter 9. At the beginning of the year 842, he sent the Collectarium on the **Epistles of Paul** to Lupus, then abbot of Ferrara, who had recently returned from the Fulda school to Gaul, as stated: about the same time, he inscribed the Commentary on **Ezekiel** to Lothair the Emperor; and the penitential book to Otgar, Archbishop, in whose chapter 15 he mentions the Battle of Fontanet, which was fought between the sons of Louis the Pious in the year 841. To the same period must also be referred the Letter on Chorepiscopi to Drogo, Bishop of Metz, as well as the letter to Regimbold, Chorepiscopus of Mainz, concerning certain questions of penance. At the same time, he also explained the Book of **Daniel** the Prophet, at the request of friends, and later inscribed his work on this subject to Louis, King of Germany; to whom he also dedicated the Exposition on the **Canticles**, which are read at matins throughout the week.

PREFACE

TO LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE

To the most excellent Lord, and most zealous in the cultivation of the Christian religion, King Louis, RABANUS, the most humble of the servants of God, wishes perpetual salvation in the Lord of lords. Since I am prompt in spirit to obey and serve your will, I daily consider what I might offer that would be pleasing to your honor, so that the memory of me may diligently remain with you, and the devotion of my mind toward your service may be evident. Therefore, a great anxiety of question turns in my mind, as I ponder what I might chiefly offer to your reverence, when others, according to what is fitting for them and the strength supplied by their wealth, bring you many gifts. I, however, feel that I cannot accomplish this by myself, yet I will not be entirely empty of a gift, for according to the poverty of my abilities and the modesty of my intellect, I have decided to offer those things which I have worked out in the meditation of the Holy Scriptures. Although these may not be worthy of your prudence, nevertheless I believe they are not to be despised everywhere. Indeed, in the past year I sent you a treatise on the prophet Daniel, which I composed not only from the sayings of the elders but also from the sense of my own smallness. Now, since it is the time when the Roman Church has established that the books of the Maccabees be read in the Church, I present to Your Excellency the exposition of those books, which, several years ago, at the request of friends, I dictated in both a historical and allegorical sense; so that, if at any time you wish to discern the mystical sense through me, you may have at hand where you can find it explained: not, I say, with very eloquent and rhetorical speech, but with clear language and Catholic faith. If you find anything in the aforementioned work pleasing and properly expressed, attribute its grace to Him from

whom all good comes; but if anything seems to you less correct or inappropriately placed, attribute it more to my ignorance than to spite, for as long as I live in this little body, I strive, as far as possible, to labor in the service of Christ. For it is His mercy, that He who gave me this purpose in mind, may now make me complete it with good work, of whom the Prophet says: The Lord is near to all who call upon Him in truth, and does not forsake all who hope in Him. May the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ long keep you safe here, loving the truth of God's law for the salvation of many, and after the course of this life grant you to attain true and eternal blessedness.

SECOND PREFACE

Most Reverend and most worthy of every office of love, Gerold, Archdeacon of the Sacred Palace, Rabanus, the lowly servant of the servants of God, greets you in Christ. I remember that, while I was at the palace in the city of Worms, I had a conversation with you about the importance of the Holy Scriptures and the difficulty of the divine histories, in which the meaning is obscure not only in some places because of the variety of things and the location of provinces, but also the understanding is hidden through the use of figurative language; and because at that same time I had recently handed over to the venerable Abbot Hilduin my commentaries on the Books of Kings, you encouraged my humble self to compose, with equal diligence and following the footsteps of our elders, commentaries on the Books of Chronicles and Maccabees. I did what I could, and I gave the exposition of the first book, which was published for King Louis; but I reserved the exposition of the following book to be handed over to your holiness, so that your request would not be in vain, nor would you have reason to blame me for refusing to grant you what I had freely given to others. Therefore, since you now have the completed work, use it as is

fitting for a servant of Christ, in communion with many; and what you alone obtained, see that it comes to the benefit of many. Furthermore, I wish your holiness to know that I composed this work partly from divine history, partly from the tradition of Josephus the Jewish historian, and partly from the historians of other nations, so that, since mention is made in the book not only of the Jewish people and their rulers but also of other nations, the truth of sacred history might be revealed by the comparison of many books, and the meaning of its narrative might become clearer to the reader. If you find anything in the aforementioned work that is pleasing and useful to you, let the giver of all good things be thanked on my behalf; but if you perceive anything in it that is blameworthy, attribute it to my weakness and ignorance, and rush to obtain pardon for me from the merciful Judge through your holy prayers, and therefore you will discuss due honor on the bestower of all things and fitting comfort on a frail craftsman. May the divine majesty agree to keep your brotherhood, flourishing with prosperous successes and deserving the joys of eternal blessedness, always mindful of us.

Chapter 1

Of Alexander, son of Philip, of Antioch the root of sin, of the city of Jerusalem burned; many from Israel consented to the king's decree by sacrificing to idols: the law was burned, many from Israel were slaughtered.

1:1 And it came to pass, after Alexander, son of Philip the Macedonian, who was the first to reign in Greece, went out from the land of Kittim, struck Darius, king of the Persians, and established many battles.

The beginning of the book of the Maccabees is similar to the beginning of the book of the prophet Ezekiel, where it is written: And it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, etc.

(Ezek. 1:1) Therefore, the first question arises for us as to why he who had said nothing yet began in this way, saying: And it came to pass, after Alexander, etc. For the word "and" is a conjunction, and we know that a following statement is not joined unless to a preceding statement; therefore, why does he who had said nothing say: "And it came to pass," when there is no statement to which what he begins can be joined? In this matter, it must be considered that just as we perceive corporeal things, so prophets and writers of divine books perceive spiritual things with their senses, and to them, even those things are present which seem absent to our ignorance; therefore it happens that in the minds of prophets, the internal things are so joined to the external that they see both at the same time, and simultaneously in them there is both the word they hear inwardly and the word they speak outwardly. Therefore, the reason is clear why he who had said nothing began by saying: And it happened; then he adds: After Alexander, son of Philip the Macedonian, who first reigned in Greece, went out from the land of Kittim, he struck Darius, king of the Persians and Medes. Therefore, it is shown to all that Alexander, son of Philip and Olympias, killed Darius, king of the Persians and Medes. Daniel also clearly expressed this in his vision, in which he describes the he-goat breaking the ram with its horns. But it is asked how Alexander is said to have first reigned in Greece, when many are found to have reigned there in different places before; for long before, kings presided over the Argives, Athenians, Lacedaemonians, Corinthians, and Lydians. Nor is Alexander found to be the first king in Macedonia, but the twenty-fourth: for the first king of the Macedonians was Caraunus, at the time when Azariah, who is also Uzziah, was king of the Hebrews in Judah (1 Kings 12), and Jeroboam was king of the Hebrews in Israel (2 Chron. 26). Also, Procas Sylvius of the Latins, Calcamenes of the Lacedaemonians, Alexander of the Corinthians, and Thespites of the Athenians; but Alexander is said to have first reigned in Greece because, while other kings previously reigned in individual

regions, he alone was the first to reign over all of Greece. For, after overthrowing Thebes, taking up arms against the Persians, he overcame the leaders of Darius in battle at the river Ganges, and finally struck the ram itself, and broke its two horns, the Medes and Persians, and placed it under his feet, and subdued both horns under his rule. And when it is said he went out from Kittim, it signifies Greece itself. For Sethim was of the descendants of Noah, that is, the son of Javan, the son of Japheth, the son of Noah, and he possessed the island of Sitammam, which is now called Cyprus, as Josephus is witness, and from it all islands and naval places are called Cethim in Hebrew. Let us read the books of Varro on Antiquities and those of Sisinnius Capito and the Greek Phlegon and other most learned men, and we will see that almost all islands and the shores of the whole world and lands near the sea were occupied by Greek settlers, who, from the mountains of Amanus and Taurus, possessed all maritime places as far as the British Ocean.

> ***1:2 He,*** they say***, waged many battles, and secured the defenses of all, and killed the kings of the land, 1:3 and took the spoils of the multitude of nations, and the earth was silent in his presence.***

Therefore, Alexander the Great, as historians relate, after the death of Darius, subdued Hyrcania and the Macedonians; after this, he engaged in battle with the Parthians, whom, resisting for a long time, he almost destroyed before he conquered them. Then he subdued the Thracians, the Evergetes, the Parymas, the Parxammenians, the Hydaspians, and other peoples who dwelled at the foot of the Caucasus, establishing there the city of Alexandria above the river Tanais. But, greedy for human blood, whether of enemies or even of allies, he always thirsted for fresh gore. Therefore, rushing into wars with persistent zeal, he received

the Cherasinos and Dracas, a strong people, into surrender; Callisthenes the philosopher, his fellow student under Aristotle, along with many other leaders, he killed because, abandoning the custom of greeting, he would not worship him as a master. After this, he sought India, so that he might end his empire at the Ocean and the farthest East, approached the city of Nisa, the Daedalos mountains, and conquered the kingdoms of Queen Cleophis; who, when she had surrendered, redeemed her kingdom by royal intercourse. Having crossed and subdued India, Alexander, when he had reached a rock of remarkable ruggedness and height, to which many peoples had fled, learned that Hercules had been prevented from attacking the same rock by an earthquake. Moved by rivalry, so that he might surpass the deeds of Hercules, with the greatest labor and danger he gained possession of the rock, and received all the peoples of that place into surrender. He waged a most bloody war with Porus, the bravest king of the Indians. Afterwards, when he had conquered the eastern peoples of each province, not without bloody victories, he boarded ships and, as he crossed the shores of the Ocean, he arrived at a certain city over which King Ambiger presided. But in the assault on the city, he lost a great part of his army to the arrows of the enemy, which were smeared with poison; and afterwards, with the help of an herb which had been shown to him in a dream and given as a drink to the wounded, when relief was brought to the rest, he stormed and captured the city. After he had circled to the Ocean and entered the river Indus, he quickly returned to Babylon, where envoys from the provinces of the whole world, terrified, awaited him, namely, those of the Carthaginians and all the cities of Africa, as well as the Spaniards, Gauls, Sicily and Sardinia, and, moreover, many parts of Italy. So great was the fear of the general established in the far East that the peoples of the farthest West were seized with terror, so that you might see an embassy from distant lands in his presence, from whom you would scarcely believe even a rumor could have reached; therefore it is well written: *and the*

earth was silent in his presence, because no one dared to rebel against him.

1:4a And he gathered a force and an exceedingly strong army.

Having conquered nations everywhere, Alexander took away their treasures and wealth from all sides, so that after his death, his attendants and soldiers, because of the massiveness of the riches he had accumulated and because of the power of the kingdom, disagreed among themselves, as Pompeius Trogus and his abbreviator Justin show in their books of Histories, writing that, after Alexander's death, fifty thousand talents of gold were found in his treasury, and thirty thousand in annual tribute. Finally, Alexander, preserved by God's will amid the dangers of battles, was at last, while staying in the city of Babylon, killed by the betrayal of the Medes, and especially by the faction of his commander Antipater, who, through his son Cassander, destroyed him with poison, as the aforementioned Pompeius Trogus narrates, saying that when Alexander, returning to Babylon, had given many days to leisure, he diligently resumed the banquet which had previously been interrupted, and, pouring himself entirely into joy, had joined night to day in wakefulness; as he was already leaving the banquet, the physician Thessalus, with the feast renewed, invited him and his companions, where, having taken a cup, he suddenly groaned as if pierced by a weapon in the middle of drinking, and was carried away from the banquet half-alive, so tortured that he called for iron as a remedy, and the touch of men caused pain as if it were wounds. But in truth, there was a plot: for the aforementioned Antipater, seeing his dearest friends killed by Alexander, and realizing that, despite his great achievements in Greece, he was not so much esteemed by the king as envied, and being harassed by various accusations from his

mother Olympias, arranged for his son Cassander to poison the king, giving him the poison, since Cassander, along with his brothers Philip and Iollas, was accustomed to serve the king. The poison was so potent that it could not be contained in bronze, iron, or clay, and could only be carried in a horse's hoof, with the son warned not to trust anyone except Thessalus and his brothers. Therefore, a banquet was prepared and repeated at Thessalus's house; Philip and Iollas, who were accustomed to taste and mix the king's drink, had the poison in cold water, and after tasting it, they poured it into the king's drink. On the fourth day, Alexander, feeling certain death approaching, declared that he recognized the fate of his ancestral house: for most of the Aeacidae had died before their thirtieth year. Then, as the soldiers were in turmoil and suspected the king was dying from a plot, he himself calmed them, and when he was brought out to the highest place in the city, he admitted them all to his presence, and extended his right hand for them to kiss as they wept. And while all were crying, he himself was not only tearful, but showed no sign of a troubled mind, so much so that he comforted some who grieved more impatiently, giving them messages for their parents, so that just as he was unconquered against enemies, so too in death his spirit remained undefeated. When his friends saw that he was failing, they asked whom he would make heir to the empire; he replied, "The most worthy." So great was his nobility of spirit that, although he left behind his son Hercules, his brother Arrhidaeus, and his pregnant wife Roxana, he forgot family ties and named the most worthy as heir: as if it were a crime for a brave man to be succeeded by anyone other than a brave man, or for the wealth of such a great kingdom to be left to any but the worthy. With this voice, as if he had sounded the war trumpet among friends, or had sent the apple of discord, so all rose up in rivalry and sought the ambition of the common people with silent conversation and the favor of the soldiers. On the sixth day, with his voice failing, he handed over Perdiccas' ring, which he had removed from his finger, and this

act calmed the growing disagreement among his friends. For although he was not named heir by voice, he seemed to have been chosen by judgment. Alexander died within a month, at the age of thirty-three. However, because mention of the kingdom of Alexander is made in the history of the Maccabees, I have inserted this from the books of the Gentiles, so that the reader may recognize that the virtue of Alexander is not recounted in vain, but that he himself is the principal by greatness of spirit and action. But as for what is said, that Alexander divided his kingdom while he was still alive among his sons, who had been raised with him in youth, it was not so much that he himself divided it, as that he left it to be divided by them. Therefore, Alexander oppressed the trembling world under himself for twelve years. His leaders, in fact, ruled for fourteen years, and like greedy cubs tore apart the rich prey struck down by the great lion; and, incited against each other by rivalry for the prey, they destroyed themselves in quarrels. Therefore, Egypt first, and part of Africa and Arabia, fell to Ptolemy by lot. The neighboring province, Syria, went to Laomedon of Mytilene, Cilicia to Philotas with his son, and Illyria to Philo. Greater Media was assigned to Acropatus, and Lesser Media to Alcetas, the brother of Perdiccas. The Susian people went to Sinos, Greater Phrygia to Antigonus, son of Philip; Lycia and Pamphylia to Nearchus, Caria to Cassander, Lydia to Menander. Leonnatus received Lesser Phrygia. Thrace and the regions of the Pontic Sea were given to Lysimachus, Cappadocia with Paphlagonia to Eumenes; the chief command of the camp fell to Seleucus, son of Antiochus; the king's bodyguards and attendants were commanded by Cassander, son of Antipater. In Bactria beyond and the regions of India, the previous governors who had begun under Alexander remained. Taxiles held the Seres, situated between the two rivers Hydaspes and Indus. Phyton, son of Agenor, was sent to the colonies founded in India. The borders of Parapamisus at Mount Caucasus were given to Apiarches. The Aracussi and Gedrosii were assigned to Fibnuti. Drancae and Rani

to Statanus, Bactrians to Amyntas, Sechodae, etc. Nicanor received the Parthians, Philip the Hyrcanians, Fratafernes the Armenians, Neoptolemus the Persians, Pencestes the Babylonians, Arthous the Pelasgians, Archesilaus obtained Mesopotamia. Yet among all these kingdoms, only four were truly prominent: that of Egypt, held by Ptolemy, son of Lagus; that of the Macedonians, possessed by Philip, also called Arrhidaeus, brother of Alexander; that of Syria and Babylon, claimed by Seleucus Nicanor; and that of Asia, held by Antigonus, as was foreshown in the vision of Daniel, where, after the breaking of one great horn on the head of that notable goat, four smaller horns arose in its place. Therefore it follows:

1:9 And the boys obtained the kingdom, each in his own place.

Therefore, upon the death of Alexander the Great, the entire body of the kingdom of the Macedonians, which he had united not without great effort, was torn apart by his successors through tyranny and was rent by many and grievous battles, as is found written at length in the histories of the nations. But omitting many of these, the writer of the present history arrives at Antiochus Epiphanes, who committed many evils against the Jews, polluted the holy place, and profaned the law; concerning whom it follows: Therefore, the first to reign over Syria after Alexander the Great was Seleucus, surnamed Nicanor, for thirty-two years; the second was Antiochus, called Soter, for nineteen years; the third was Antiochus, called Theos, who reigned for fifteen years; the fourth was Seleucus, surnamed Gallinicus, son of Antiochus, for twenty years; the fifth, Seleucus Ceraunus, son of Seleucus Gallerius, for three years; the sixth, Antiochus the Great, whom Scripture here calls the illustrious Antiochus as the father, who was the brother of Seleucus Ceraunus and son of Seleucus Gallinicus, reigned for

thirty-six years; the seventh, Seleucus, who was also surnamed Philopator, for twelve years; after whom Antiochus Epiphanes, who is also called renowned or noble, brother of Seleucus Philopator and son of Antiochus the Great, reigned for eleven years, about whom Scripture now narrates that from them arose the sinful root,

1:11 Antiochus the illustrious, son of King Antiochus, who had been a hostage at Rome.

He is rightly called the sinful root, since he was a useless stock, prone to sin and most ready for wickedness, under whom the persecution of the law of God and the wars of the Maccabees are recounted. For the entire period of the kingdom of the Greeks is gathered from the first year of Seleucus Nicanor up to the beginning of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, one hundred and thirty-seven years.

1:12 In those days, lawless men went out from Israel and persuaded many, saying: Let us go and make a covenant with the nations.

Greek and Roman history recounts that Antiochus Epiphanes plotted deceit against Ptolemy Philopator, the son of Cleopatra his sister, of whom he was the uncle, and deprived him of the kingdom of Egypt; and after the death of Cleopatra, when Alanicus the eunuch, the tutor of Philometor, and Leneus governed Egypt and sought to recover Syria, which Antiochus had seized by betrayal, a battle arose between the uncle and the boy Ptolemy. And when they engaged between Pelusium and Mount Casius, the leaders of Ptolemy were defeated; but Antiochus, sparing the boy and pretending friendship, went up to Memphis, and there, according to the custom of Egypt, received the kingdom, and claiming to

provide for the boy's affairs, with a small force he subdued all Egypt, and entered the abundant and most fertile cities, and did what neither his fathers nor his forefathers had done, as it is written of him in Daniel. For no one in the kingdom of Syria had so devastated Egypt, and he scattered all their wealth, and was so cunning that he overthrew by his deceit the wise counsels of those who were the boy's leaders.

1:21 And Antiochus returned after he struck Egypt in the one hundred and forty-third year, 1:22 and he went up to Jerusalem with a great multitude.

Therefore, it is consequently narrated about the same king in the aforementioned histories that after he was driven out by the Egyptians, he came into Judea, that is, against the holy covenant, and plundered the temple and took away a great amount of gold, and after placing a military base of Macedonians in the citadel, he returned to his own land and, after two years, again gathered an army against Ptolemy to the south. And when the two brothers of Ptolemy, sons of Cleopatra, whose uncle was Antiochus, were besieged in Alexandria, Roman envoys came, one of whom was Marcus Publius Letias. When he found him standing on the shore and delivered a decree by which he was ordered by the friends of the Roman people to withdraw and be content with his own dominion, and when he had brought the answer to the council of friends, Marcus is said to have drawn a circle in the sand with the staff he held in his hand, and to have limited the king and said: The Senate and the Roman people command that you answer in this place what you intend to do. At these words, he, terrified, said: If this pleases the Senate and the Roman people, I must withdraw from here; and so he immediately moved his army. Josephus wrote things consistent with these, that the king Antiochus, having returned from Egypt because of fear of the Romans, led his army

to Jerusalem; and arriving there in the one hundred and forty-third year after the reign of the first Seleucus, in the one hundred and fifty-third Olympiad, on the twenty-fourth day of the month Casleu, which the Macedonians call Apelleon, he took it without any resistance, as those who agreed with his will opened the gates for him, and entering the city of Jerusalem, he killed many who thought contrary to him, as well as those who, by opening the gate, betrayed the city of God, because of the wealth of the temple, and having taken away much money from it, he returned to Antioch. But after he plundered the temple, so that he carried away the vessels of God and the golden lamps, and the golden altar, and the table, and the sanctuary, nor did he refrain from the veils, which were of fine linen and scarlet, and draining the gold and treasures, leaving absolutely nothing, he brought the Jews to the greatest mourning because of these things. For he also forbade the daily sacrifices which they offered to God according to the law; and after destroying the whole city, he killed some, led others away captive with their sons and wives, so that the number of the multitude of captives seemed to be up to ten thousand.

But mystically, this Antiochus, who entered the Holy Land with arrogance, devastated the temple, and defiled the holy place with pagan superstition, holds the type of the Antichrist, who wages a cruel war against the Church of Christ, and strives to defile the souls of believers, which are truly the temple of God, with his error. Concerning him, it is written in the prophecy of Daniel, under the figure of this Antiochus: "His heart shall be set against the holy covenant, and he shall act, and return to his own land. At the appointed time he shall return and come toward the south, and he shall be enraged against the holy covenant, and he shall act, and return, and shall devise against those who forsake the holy covenant. And arms from him shall stand, and they shall defile the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the continual sacrifice, and they shall set up the abomination of desolation. And the

wicked shall pretend deceitfully in the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and act," etc. (Dan. 11:28-32) There is no doubt that these things, which happened under Antiochus Epiphanes as a prefigurement, that is, that the most wicked king persecuted the people of God, foreshadow the cruelty of the Antichrist, who will persecute the Christian people, who will be outraged against the covenant of God, and will plot against those whom he wishes to abandon the law of God, and will defile the sanctuary of God, namely, by corrupting men, created in the image of God, with various vices. He will take away the continual sacrifice when he prohibits the offering of the sacrifice of praise to Christ, the Son of God, in the Church; he will set up the abomination of desolation in the holy place when he forces Christians to render divine worship to himself, so that, sitting in the temple of God, he shows himself as if he were God. Therefore, many of our people think, because of the magnitude of his cruelty and baseness, that Domitian or Nero will be the Antichrist; but although they were themselves Antichrists, as far as his body is concerned, and are his members, yet he himself is the head of all, who is to come at the end of the world, when, according to the word of Truth, there will be tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be (Matt. 24:221). Yet, according to John's words, there are already many Antichrists (1 Jn. 2:18), through whose members the same evil enemy already works the mystery of iniquity, namely through heretics, schismatics, and pagans, and seduces many; then also, if it were possible, he will scandalize even the elect, because Satan will be released from his prison, and will pour out all his fury, as much as is permitted, upon the followers of Christ. Therefore, Antiochus takes away the golden altar from Jerusalem when, by the persuasion of the evil one, he removes from the Church those who seemed to be more perfect and to pray to the Lord for the state of the people not without great zeal. He also takes away the lampstand of light and all its vessels when he casts down from

their order, either through fear or earthly desire, those who were fulfilling the office of preaching and ought to shine among the people of God as lights through various forms of doctrine. He therefore takes away the table of the showbread and its vessels when he strives, through heretics, to confuse the Holy Scriptures with wicked interpretation, and seeks to corrupt with the cunning of his wickedness and lead into error those who seemed to remain in the meditation of the law of God, as vessels of the table of God and loaves of proposition.

The same ancient enemy also takes away the veil and the crowns, and the golden ornament which was on the face of the temple, and destroys everything, when he twists the letter of God's law, in which divine wisdom and heavenly mysteries are hidden, and where the crown of perpetual reward is promised to those who labor well and keep God's commandments, to be received in the heavenly kingdom and everlasting glory, by distorting the meanings and corrupting the sense into a foreign understanding, therefore deceiving souls who obey him. For I understand the gold, silver, and hidden treasures as nothing other than the beauty of eloquence and the purity of thoughts, together with the treasure of virtues which are placed in the hidden hearts of the faithful; the Devil tries to take all these things away from the kingdom of Christ, as he attempts to drag their possessors, stripped of these goods, with him into the abyss of his own destruction. Therefore, every day, weeping and groaning arise in the Church, as the assembly of the faithful is not a little saddened by compassion for the fall of their neighbors. Therefore, it follows:

1:25-26 And he made a great slaughter of men, and spoke with great pride, and there was great weeping in Israel.

Every rank, every age, and every sex grieves when the persecutor rages, because no person is immune from persecution, and each

one groans both for the loss of calmness and for the harm to the faith of those who fall, because, as Paul says (1 Cor. 12:26): The members in the body of Christ care for one another, and if one member suffers, all the members suffer together; and so the same Apostle, writing against those who loved vain glory, after listing the hardships he himself suffered physically, added, saying (2 Cor. 11:28-30): Besides those things which are outside, my daily pressure, the care for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I do not burn? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. And elsewhere: Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep, having the same feeling toward one another; not being wise in your own sight, but consenting to the humble. (Rom. 12:15-16)

1:29 And after two years the king sent the chief collector of tribute to the cities of Judah.

We have said above that Antiochus was a type of Antichrist; likewise, in this place, the son of perdition can similarly be understood as the chief collector of tribute, whom the prince of this world and the ruler of these present darknesses, the Devil, incites to demand that in the cities of Judah, that is, in the Churches of Christ, the tribute of sins be paid to him; however, he does not always demand this everywhere by force of persecutions, but sometimes by torments, sometimes by flattery, sometimes by threats and open cruelty, sometimes by deceit and trickery. Therefore it is written:

1:31 He spoke to them peaceful words in deceit.

But whoever believes him, prepares persecution for himself; for this same most wicked enemy, by evil persuasion, performs lying signs and wonders, so that men may believe him to be God and

offer him divine worship. Therefore, those who believe him, he spiritually kills in their soul; but those who resist, he afflicts with bodily torment. Therefore it happens, which must be read with great sorrow of mind, that he might destroy a great number of the people of Israel, when he converts many from the Christian faith into apostasy: he takes the spoils of the city, when he removes the ornaments of the church; he sets it on fire, when he devastates it with persecution; he destroys its houses and walls all around, when he scatters the people of believers and kills their defenders, that is, the teachers, and leads captive the women, and the children, and the livestock, because those who are soft in spirit and are children in understanding and serve carnal desires, living after the manner of brute animals, are especially open to the captivity and snare of the ancient enemy, with the churches of Christ devastated and his ministers scattered because of persecution, the evil enemy strives to establish the art of wickedness in their place and to substitute blasphemous worshipers, so that, if possible, through wicked men, the Christian name, which alone has prevailed in the world, may be utterly destroyed, and the will of the Devil may be fulfilled in the pollution of idols and the multiplication of sins. Therefore it follows:

1:39 And they poured out innocent blood around the sanctuary, and they defiled the sanctuary, etc.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem flee when, as the persecution grows fierce, some flee physically so that they may not be scandalized; others flee in mind, and suffer great scandal in their souls; others persevere in the confession of Christ even unto death, and, free from the hands of the persecutors, escape to heaven to be rewarded; and therefore the holy land becomes the dwelling of foreigners, when, as the number of persecutors multiplies

throughout the world, the members of Christ destined to be crowned through martyrdom increase: its feast days are turned into mourning, when the most celebrated rite of the Christian religion is not permitted to have the adornment of its splendor;

1:41 and its sabbaths into reproach,

and the hope which the faithful have in the future rest of souls is abolished, or is mocked by the enemy.

1:42 According to its glory, so its shame is multiplied.

For the glory of the Church of the faithful is defiled by shame, when, with the enemy ruling, the glory of the heavenly ceremonies and the dignity of the divine offices suffer the greatest reproach from the blasphemies of the wicked.

1:43 And King Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom that all people should be one, and that each should abandon his own law.

The writings and spiritual letters of Antiochus, the philosopher, are from the pagan heretics and schismatics among the Christians, who desire to subvert the truth of Christ's law and the decrees of the Catholic faith, and who are pained by divine worship and the Christian religion. Yet the more they strive through error to unite people to themselves, the more they cause them to disagree with one another, because they themselves are not in harmony with each other, but, rebel through various sects, they differ and therefore are less able to serve and unite in unity. For among the proud, as Scripture testifies, there are always quarrels, and according to the judgment of Truth, Every kingdom divided

against itself will be laid waste, and house will fall upon house. (Luke 11:18) The books and letters of Antiochus command in Jerusalem and in the cities of Judea that they follow the laws of the nations, and therefore define holocausts, and sacrifices, and offerings to be made in the temple of God. For the greatest care and zeal of heretics and pagans is that in the church of Christ they either confuse or utterly extinguish divine worship, lest the sincerity of true faith, which works through love, offer a pleasing holocaust to God on the altar of the believer's heart, nor the mystical sacrifices of the body and blood of the Lord, together with the sacred prayers of the faithful and the offering of good deeds, be worthily presented in the true temple of God to the creator of all and giver of all good things. They forbid the celebration of the Sabbath, because they deny that in the heavenly kingdom there will be the rest of holy souls. They order the building of altars, temples, and idols, because they desire to make the minds of the faithful vessels for evil spirits; to sacrifice swine's flesh and common animals, that is, to lead an unclean life and, like brute animals, to live in lust and the desires of the flesh; to leave their sons uncircumcised, that is, with no guard, no self-control, and no discernment to temper thoughts, words, and deeds, so that they forget the divine law and change God's justifications into the commission of various crimes. And all these things they compel to be done not only by persuasion of words, but also by the torment of various punishments. Therefore it follows:

1:52 And whoever did not act according to the word of the king would die, according to all these words.

Cruelty blazes when wickedness burns; savagery rages when desire boils. Throughout his entire kingdom, Antiochus decrees torments by written orders, and brings death upon the worshippers of the God of the land. In the same way, Antichrist, through his

most wicked ministers, seeks out various kinds of punishments, so that he might uproot, crush, and destroy Christians from the state of the most holy religion.

1:57 On the fifteenth day of the month of Casleu, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, King Antiochus built the abominable idol of desolation.

The month of Casleu is the same among the Greeks as what is called December among the Latins. On the tenth day of this month, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year of the reign of the Greeks, which they begin to count from the first year of Seleucus, Antiochus Epiphanes placed the abominable idol of desolation in the temple of God, that is, the statue of Jupiter Olympius; moreover, in the eighth year of his rule, in which year he built a shrine of Jupiter Peregrinus or Hospitaller on the summit of Mount Garizim in Samaria, at the request of the Samaritans themselves, who asked him to do so by letter, as Josephus testifies. But we read in the Gospel according to Matthew, when the Savior was questioned by his disciples about the sign of his coming and the end of the age, that he replied among other things: Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, let the reader understand (Matt. 24:15). When we are called to understanding, it shows that what has been said is mystical. It is written in Daniel in this way: And in the middle of the week my sacrifice and offerings will be taken away, and in the temple there will be the abomination of desolation, and desolation will persist until the consummation of time and the end. (Dan. 9:27)

The Apostle speaks of this (2 Thess. 2), that the man of lawlessness, the adversary, will be exalted against everything that is called God and is worshipped, so that he will dare to stand in the temple of God and show that he himself is the Lord. His

coming, according to the working of Satan, will destroy them and bring to desolation those who have received him. This can be understood simply either about the Antichrist, or about the image of Caesar which Pilate placed in the temple, or about the equestrian statue of Hadrian, which stood in the very Holy of Holies even to the present day. Also, according to the truth of the Scriptures, an abomination is called an idol, and therefore desolation is added, because in the desolate and deserted temple an idol was set up; but when the idol of jealousy was established in the temple of God throughout all the cities, then the ministers of the most wicked king built altars all around, and before the doors of houses and in the streets they burned incense and offered sacrifices; because, with the unclean Antichrist reigning in the house, his supporters and promoters, and all the wicked, having rejected the worship of the one God and despised the house of God, which is the holy Church, with confused mind and disordered conduct, in various places, to the demons of different errors and various crimes, they bring deadly sacrifices. And it is well said that they built altars all around, because, having abandoned the simplicity of the truth, they follow the erroneous sects of wickedness. For, as the Psalmist testifies, all the wicked walk around (Ps. 11:9). And before the doors of their houses and in the streets they burn incense and offer sacrifices, who do not deserve to enter to the altar of God and there to offer the incense of pure prayer to God, but on the broad and spacious way which leads to death (Matt. 7:13), they carry their deeds and words as offerings to the evil enemy.

1:59 And, he says, ***they burned the books of the law of God with fire, tearing them apart.***

They tear apart and burn the books of God with fire, who, through the fire of desire, wish to tear apart the purity of the law of God

from its state of righteousness by heretical depravity, and eagerly seek to slaughter the holy preachers, to whom the treasure of the testaments of God has been entrusted, with the sword of their wickedness.

What is signified by the number twenty and five, except those who, entangled by the five senses of the body in carnal desires, act and think contrary to the law of God, which consists in the two Testaments and in the two commandments, namely, the love of God and of neighbor.

Therefore, twenty-five is produced by multiplying five by itself, and rightly this number is compared to the deserters of the law, who, through each sense of the body, that is, through sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch, oppose the divine precepts written in the Pentateuch. And therefore it is said that they sacrificed

1:62 on the altar which was against the altar,

because on the altar of wickedness, which pride had erected against the altar of the Catholic faith, all the wicked offer to the Devil the ill-fated sacrifices of their actions and words.

1:63 And women who circumcised their sons were slaughtered, according to the command of King Antiochus.

The meaning of the story is clear, which explains the torments that wicked persecutors inflicted upon worshippers, both then in the Old Testament and now similarly in the New. Nor is it easy for anyone to name all the kinds of punishments which the most evil torturers inflicted upon the martyrs of Christ.

But according to the allegorical sense, what is shown by the women who were circumcising their sons, if not the honorable persons of the faithful, who, examining their actions, words, and thoughts with the utmost discernment, hurry to cut off with the sword of the spirit whatever they find unnecessary in them? This spiritual Antiochus desires to slaughter them, because he strives either to strike them physically through torture or to kill them spiritually in the soul through denial. Antiochus is interpreted as 'the silence of poverty', and he is rightly called by this name, who, lacking spiritual knowledge and deprived of sacred virtues, persecutes in others through envy that which he himself does not at all possess; therefore it fittingly follows.

1:64 And they were hanging, he says, ***the boys by their necks throughout their homes.***

Because those who are children not by understanding but by evil and humble in spirit, they do not delay to kill on account of the confession of faith. Similarly, those who had circumcised them were slaughtered, because they especially harass the holy preachers, who, by the knife of holiness and the word of evangelical doctrine, restrain and discipline their subjects, with the troubles of persecutions.

1:65 And many of the people of Israel resolved among themselves not to eat unclean things.

No persecution nor any tribulation could ever tear the saints of God, who are predestined and called according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, from the faith of Christ: but persevering in truth, they neither ate food sacrificed to idols, nor consented to be defiled by the uncleanness of sins, nor did they allow the holy law of God to be broken and corrupted by heretical

corruption, but rather chose to die for the name of Christ than to consent to wickedness. Therefore one of them, relying on this confidence, writing to the disciples, therefore testified, saying: For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angel, nor principality, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39). But let us see what comfort was sent to the laboring servants of God.

Chapter 2

Mathathias and his five sons mourn the people, the temple, and the desolation of the law. Mathathias is compelled to sacrifice to idols, but he refused: he killed the minister of King Antiochus who was sacrificing. Fleeing into the desert, they were killed on the Sabbath: Mathathias decreed to fight on the Sabbath: he and his sons, killing sinners, overthrow the altars of idols. Mathathias, about to die, advises his sons to defend Israel, etc.

2:1 In those days, there arose Mathathias, son of John, son of Simeon, a priest, etc.

In the book of Daniel, where mention of this place is made under a riddle, it is found written therefore: And the wicked shall deceitfully mimic the covenant; but the people who know their God shall prevail and act. And the learned among the people shall teach many, and they shall fall by sword, and by flame, and by captivity, and by plunder of days. And when they fall, they shall be helped with a little help, and many shall join them deceitfully. And some of the learned shall fall, that they may be refined, and chosen, and made white, until the appointed time, for there is yet another time. (Dan. 11:32-35)

How much the Jews suffered from Antiochus is related by the present history of the Maccabees, and their triumph is testified by

those who, for the preservation of the law of God, endured flames and swords, slavery and plundering, and the utmost punishments. No one doubts that similar things will happen under the Antichrist, with many resisting his power and fleeing in different directions. The Hebrews interpret these events, in the final destruction of the temple which happened under Vespasian and Titus, as meaning that there were many among the people who knew their Lord and were killed for preserving the law. And when they have fallen, he says (Dan. 11:35), they will be helped, and many will join them deceitfully. And some of the learned will fall, so that they may be refined, chosen, and purified until the appointed time, because there will still be another time. The little help historically refers to Mattathias from the village of Modin, who rebelled against the leaders of Antiochus and tried to preserve the worship of the true God. He calls it little help because, after beginning the defense, he lived only a short time, dying after one year, and afterwards his son Judas, called Maccabeus, fell fighting, and the rest of his brothers were deceived by the fraud of their enemies.

But mystically, Mathathias signifies the Lord the Savior, who is the leader of the people of God and the defender of His elect; whose sons fight for the house of Israel, defend the sanctuary of God and the divine law. Moreover, Mathathias is interpreted as the gift of God, the mystery of whose name has revealed to us the ritual of His incarnation. Therefore, He Himself also says in the Gospel: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (Jn. 3:16).

For he who is given by God is the perfect gift of God. But these things have been said only about his incarnation. However, concerning his divinity, by which he is equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit, it must be believed that he, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, accomplishes the same special consideration. Just as the Holy Spirit is read as the gift of God, yet nevertheless,

together with the Father and the Son, is believed and worshipped as one God: therefore in the Gospel he is both read as sent and as coming of his own accord, as in the Lord's saying: I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete (Jn. 14:16); and again: But when the Paraclete comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth (Jn. 15:26). To Nicodemus he says: The Spirit breathes where he wills, and you hear his voice, but you do not know where he comes or where he goes (Jn. 3:8).

Here therefore Mathathias is described as the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest from the sons of Joarib. John is interpreted as "by the grace of God," Simeon as "hearing," Joarib as "the Lord exalting." These interpretations rightly fit this mystery, because the mediator between God and men can be called the grace of God, as the Apostle says: The grace of God tasted death for men (Heb. 2:9); and "hearing," because he himself says in the Gospel: What I have heard from the Father, these I speak in the world (Jn. 8:26); and "the Lord exalting," of whom the Prophet says: Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength (Ps. 21:13). He himself is rightly called priest, of whom it is written: The Lord has sworn and will not repent: you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4). All the sons of this Mathathias are holy, who are called the members of his body; but how they can be designated by the number five is not wrongly questioned. For so many sons of Mathathias are historically read to have existed, that is, John who was surnamed Gaddis; and Simeon, who was surnamed Tharsi; and Judas, who was surnamed Maccabeus; and Eleazar, who was surnamed Abaron; and Jonathan, who was surnamed Alphus. Let us see, therefore, if this number is found anywhere in the New Testament to express the same thing. We also read the Apostle Paul saying this about Christ to the Ephesians: He who descended is also he who ascended above all the heavens, that he might fill all things; and he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors

and teachers, for the completion of the saints in the work of ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:10-12).

Behold, here five types are indicated in those persons whom the divine calling has ordained to the teaching office of the Church. But let us consider how the sons of Mattathias themselves, with the interpretations of their names, can be fitted to these types.

Therefore, the first of his sons is called John, who was surnamed Gaddis. John is also interpreted as “his grace,” but Gaddis means “kid” or “my temptation.” These names, therefore, fit the order of the apostles very well, unless I am mistaken, who were chosen by the grace of the Lord for the height of this honor, but nevertheless endured many temptations and injuries from sinners and persecutors; which the Savior himself seems to foretell when he says in the Gospel: “I have chosen you out of the world, that you should go and bring forth much fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (Jn. 15:16); and again: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves,” etc. (Matt. 10:16) Behold, those who are filled with the grace of the Lord are shown to be afflicted not insignificantly by the insults of all evildoers.

The second son of Mattathias was Simeon, who was surnamed Tharsi, and who in most later places is called Simon. Therefore, Simon, or Simeon, means "hearing," or "he has heard sorrow;" Tharsi means "exploration of joy." Nor is it inappropriate that these names suit the order of the prophets, who, illuminated by the grace of the Holy Spirit, both foresee the future punishments of the wicked and, by tasting the comfort of the coming rewards of the saints inwardly, anticipate them; and persuade others to guard against future evils and to desire future goods.

Judas Maccabeus was the third son in order. For Judas is interpreted as confessor or glorifier, and Maccabeus as warrior. This name fits quite well for the evangelists, who preach the

Gospel of peace and the glory of Christ throughout the whole world, and drive out the wicked errors of pagans and heretics.

The fourth son, this is Eleazar who was surnamed Abaron, and in the former name signifies "help of God," while in the latter it means "exalted generation"; not without reason is he compared by way of figure to those shepherds who, being sufficiently strengthened by the help of God and exalted in faith and virtues, are appointed as leaders in the Church, so that by feeding the sheep of God with sound faith and good examples, they may rightly lead them to the fertility of the heavenly homeland.

The youngest of these sons was called Jonathan, surnamed Alphus, most fittingly corresponding to the holy teachers according to the interpretation of their names. For Jonathan is interpreted as "gift of the dove," or "the Lord's willing one." Alphus, however, means "fugitive" or "one of a thousand." And these names rightly express the teachers of Christ, who, filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, submit themselves willingly to the Lord even unto death: and, having fulfilled the mission of His life, proclaim the law of God in the world, and teach men to flee earthly desires and seek eternal joys, so that there, according to the significance of the number one thousand, with God rewarding them, they may receive the fullness of their reward, and possess true blessedness with Christ and His angels without end. What follows here:

2:6 They saw the evils that were happening among the people of Judah and Jerusalem, etc.

For these, indeed, recognize with sorrow the various scandals that are continually inflicted by the wicked in the Church of God; they long to avenge them with a spiritual sword, do not fear to offer

themselves as a sacrifice and to deliver themselves to death for the salvation of their own. Therefore it follows:

2:14 And Mathathias tore his garments, and his sons, etc.

What then is the tearing of garments, if not to surrender their bodies to suffering? And what is to be covered with sackcloth, if not to punish the righteous as if they were sinners, or to torment them? Sackcloth is also made from goats, a rough and coarse torment. For goats are rightly associated with offenses, since in the judgment of the Lord they are placed among the sinners (Ps. 34). Therefore, because the Lord assumed the flesh of sin, he recalls that he clothed himself in sackcloth: for if we take it historically, we never read that he actually used sackcloth. Therefore, while the Jews were troublesome through insults and plots, he concealed his divinity from their darkened minds with the veil of flesh; because they did not deserve to recognize whom they were treating with such wickedness and seeking to kill. For on account of the sins of the people, the Redeemer of the human race surrendered his flesh to death, and sympathized with our weakness: concerning whom the Lord himself says through Isaiah: For the transgressions of my people I struck him (Isa. 53:8), and: He himself will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him among many, and he shall share the spoils with the strong, because he surrendered his soul to death, and was counted among the wicked, and he himself bore the sins of many, and prayed for the transgressors (Isa. 53:12). Likewise, his sons, that is, the apostles and martyrs, taught by his example, did not hesitate to die temporarily for the law of God and the salvation of their brothers, so that through this they might merit the joys of the heavenly kingdom with the holy angels. Therefore John the apostle says: In this we know love, because he laid down his life

for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers (I Jn. 3:16).

2:15 And those who had been sent came there, etc.

For Antiochus the spiritual one sends into the city of Modin, which is interpreted as judgment: namely, into the holy Church, where the judgments of God are most diligently kept; so that those who had fled there seeking the remedy for their souls may be forced to depart from the law, to offer the sacrifice of sins and the worship of wickedness to the Devil. But what follows we cannot read without lament,

2:16a because many of the people of Israel, consenting, joined them,

when we see some, compelled by torments, apostatize from the religion of devotion; others, enticed by the desire of this world, fall back; others, deceived by the cunning of heretics, are led astray; and others, by their own lust and passion, return to the former filth of vices: yet that which follows brings great joy,

2:16b because Mattathias and his sons stood firm;

since, without doubt, those persist in truth and righteousness who have deserved to be sons of the true Mattathias, that is, of Jesus Christ, and by keeping his faith and commandments, strive with unwavering spirit, through his grace, to obtain the rewards of eternal life.

2:18 And those who had been sent by Antioch, answering, said to Mattathias: Chief, etc.

Whether by deceit or by force, the ancient enemy always plots how he might overthrow the worship of devotion in the Church of Christ. For he himself, who approached our Redeemer in the desert to tempt Him, saying: If you are the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread (Matt. 4:3); and after he had set Him on the pinnacle of the temple in the holy city, he said: If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down (Matt. 4:6). For it is written: For He has given His angels charge over you, and in their hands they shall bear you up, lest perhaps you dash your foot against a stone (Ps. 91:12). And then, transferring Him to a high mountain, he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and said to Him: All these things will I give you, if, falling down, you will adore me (Matt. 4:9). The same things he deceitfully suggests daily in His members through his ministers, so that for worldly ambition they might abandon the way of justice, and do the command of the most wicked king who reigns over all the children of pride (Job 41:34), etc.

2:19 And Mattathias answered and said with a loud voice, etc.

The determination of Mattathias strengthened the spirits of his sons; so also the patience and long-suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthens the faith of all believers. Therefore he said to his disciples: Do not be surprised if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you (Jn. 15:18); nor fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; but rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10:28). In your patience you will possess your souls, and your reward will be great in heaven (Luke 21:19). But he who perseveres to the end, he will be saved (Matt. 24:13).

2:23 And when he ceased to speak these words, etc.

This Jew who sacrificed to idols before the eyes of all signifies bad Catholics, who by their wicked deeds and the mark of sins scandalize their neighbors. For in this they are proved to sacrifice to idols, in that they are shown to be captivated by the principal vices.

Where Paul the Apostle calls greed the service of idols (Gal. 5:20). But the sword of Mattathias slays these over the altar, because the vengeance of the most just judge exercises rightful punishment upon such people. And also he killed the man whom Antiochus had sent, who was convincing them to sacrifice, at that very moment: because on the last day of judgment, not only sinful men, but also the instigators of sinners, namely evil spirits, will receive the deserved punishment of eternal damnation; and at the same time the altar of wickedness will be destroyed, because after the judgment has been completed, no further opportunity to sin will be granted to the wicked. But what follows:

2:26 He was zealous for the law, as Phinehas did to Zimri the son of Salu (see Num. 25),

shows that the mighty deeds of the holy fathers prefigured the most noble act of our Redeemer in the last times.

2:27 And Mattathias cried out with a loud voice in the city, saying, etc.

These words of Mattathias prefigured the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, who encourages us daily to leave behind the vanity of this world and to seek the heavenly joys of the kingdom. For he

himself says in the Gospel: Whoever does not renounce all that he possesses cannot be my disciple. Whoever loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not carry his cross daily and follow me is not worthy of me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it (Luke 14:26-33); but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it (Matthew 16:25). For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but suffers the loss of his own soul, or what exchange will a man give for his soul (Luke 9:25)? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each according to his works (Matt. 16:27).

For our Redeemer and his innocent sons flee, and they leave behind whatever they have in the city, because through the guidance of Truth himself we desire to ascend to the heights of virtue, and, despising as extra those things which pertain to the luxury of the world, we cast them away. Therefore it is that we read in the Gospel (Matt. 5) that the same Lord led his disciples up the mountain, and there he sat, and there he taught them; there he prayed and there he fed the crowds, so that by his example he might always urge us to go further, to higher and more perfect things, etc.

2:29 Then many descended seeking judgment and justice into the desert, and they sat there themselves and their children.

These, who with Mattathias and his sons did not ascend into the mountains, but descended into the desert to sit there and seek judgment and justice, we can better understand allegorically than as Jews who, after receiving the grace of Christ's baptism, thought circumcision and the old law should still be observed. And it is fitting that these are remembered as having gone into the desert, who, with the dawning of the truth of the Gospel, considered the

shadow of the law, now deserted, as still necessary for themselves, and proclaimed that the legal Sabbath should be observed, when all these things in the times of the law preceded as signs, and should be observed spiritually in the New Testament. Against whom the Apostle argues very extensively in his Epistles, asserting that the end of the law is Christ for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom. 10:4). Therefore, these are rightly struck by the sword of spiritual enemies, who do not consider the grace of Christ sufficient for their salvation. Also, according to spiritual sense, among these seekers of the desert, lazy ones can be understood, who, having received the grace of the Christian religion, think it sufficient for themselves that they have received divine gifts and the cleansing of baptism, nor do they wish, after the removal of stains, to exercise works of virtue, nor do they remember that evangelical parable in which the Savior, narrating about the unclean spirit in the Gospel, said that the unclean spirit went out from a man and walked through waterless places, seeking rest and not finding it. Again, with seven spirits more wicked, he found his former house empty, swept, and adorned: such people are easily overwhelmed by spiritual enemies, because they did not care to be armed with the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, and the sword of the spirit (Eph. 6:14), with which they should have resisted their enemies. Therefore it is added that Mattathias and his friends mourned over their destruction, because the Church is afflicted with great sorrow when it recognizes that some from its own number have fallen into the pit of sins through the snares and persecution of evil enemies.

2:40 And the man said to his neighbor: If we all do as our brothers have done, etc.

Therefore, good men greatly detest idleness, which is the enemy of the soul, and indeed they would rather choose to fight daily with

spiritual enemies with courage, than to weaken in the sloth of evil idleness, especially since they presume to have the hope of victory not from themselves, but to have divine help, nor do they promise themselves security in the present, but in the future, when all adversities have been destroyed, death itself, the last enemy, will be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26), and there will be no more mourning, nor crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:4), when the saints will rejoice in the joy of the face of God, and will enjoy the most wholesome delight at His right hand forever (Ps. 16:11).

2:42 Then there was gathered to them a synagogue of Jews [Assidaeans], strong in strength from Israel, etc.

As Scripture relates, it is clear that while the Savior and his apostles were preaching the Gospel, many from the Jewish people came to faith, believing the law and the prophets who bore witness to the coming of Christ, and likewise many from among the proselytes and foreigners, leaving behind their idols and the superstition of paganism, flocked from everywhere to hear the word of God, and were added to the number of believers:

2:44 And they struck the sinners in their wrath, and the wicked men in their anger.

Stirred up by the zeal of faith, they cast out evil spirits and expelled them from men possessed through error, and they exposed the poisons of their deceit to them. The Jews also, being compelled, fled to the nations, according to that passage of the Gospel where, when men were healed, demons were permitted by the Savior to enter into the swine (Mark 8:28-34), so that the unclean possessors might possess vessels of uncleanness.

2:48 And they obtained the law from the hands of kings.

The soldiers of Christ obtained the law from the hands of kings when, persevering in the truth of the Gospel, they yielded to no error, but rather, through prayer and their preaching, subjected others to the truth. Therefore it happened that many of those who, puffed up by the pride of the world, had previously been persecutors of the Christian religion, later, having been converted, became the strongest defenders of the truth, and did not give the horn to the sinner, because they did not consent to iniquity; according to that passage from Esther, who said in her prayer: Do not give, Lord, your scepter to those who are not (Esther 14:11).

2:49 And the days of Mattathias' death drew near, etc.

This call of Mattathias, who encouraged his sons to be imitators of the law of God and to give their lives for the covenant of the fathers, fits well with the evangelical doctrine, because Truth itself instructed its disciples with words and examples on how to resist all errors of the Jews, pagans, and heretics, and to convert the world to faith through their preaching; and it affirmed its own doctrine by the testimony of the law and the prophets, showing that the author of the New Testament is the same as that of the Old Testament.

2:64 Therefore, you, sons, be strengthened and act manfully in the law.

We read in the Gospel of John that the Savior, hurrying to His passion on the very night on which He was betrayed, after the mystical supper and the washing of the feet which, tightened with a towel, He performed for His disciples, offered many teachings

of encouragement, among which He both foretold the passion that was to come upon them in the world and promised the glory of the future kingdom and the joy of the heavenly homeland (Jn. 13). But since the death of Mattathias prefigures the passion of the Redeemer, let us hear how the teaching office of the Church has been ordained throughout the whole time of this present life.

2:65 And behold, Simeon your brother, I know that he is a man of counsel: always listen to him, and he will be a father to you.

We said above that Simeon is interpreted as "he who hears," and it is correctly said that Simeon is a man of counsel, because those who, taught by the grace of the Holy Spirit, are instructed by inner hearing, are useful and suitable for counsel in all things. Therefore the Psalmist says: I will hear what the Lord God will speak within me, for he will speak peace to his people, etc. (Ps. 85:8). And in the Apocalypse: He who hears, let him say, Come (Rev. 22:17). The heavenly teacher urges us to listen to those whom he, teaching inwardly, has made to be beneficial teachers for us.

2:66 And Judas, he said, Maccabeus, strong in might, will be your leader of the army; he himself will wage the war of the people.

What is signified by Judas Maccabeus, if not the first preachers of the Gospel, who, having been taught by the Savior himself, were made fit to wage the war of the Christian people? But because Judas is interpreted as confession, and in many places holds the type of the Savior himself, let us know that our war is then conducted in proper order, when he agrees to direct both our counsel and our action. Therefore, Truth itself says to the disciples: Remain in me and I in you; as the branch cannot bear

fruit of itself unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me, for without me you can do nothing (Jn. 15:4-5). And, Behold, I am with you all days, even to the end of the world (Matt. 28:20).

2:69 And he blessed them, and was added to his fathers, etc.

It is found written in the Gospel how the Savior, after he finished the supper which he had with his disciples before his passion, gave his final teaching by instructing his disciples that night, and at the end, having finished his prayer directed to the Father, praised his disciples to be kept by him, saying: Holy Father, keep them in your name whom you have given me, that they may be one as we are (Jn. 17:11). And a little later: Sanctify them, he says, in the truth. Your word is truth; as you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth, etc. (Jn. 17:17). For with such words our Mathathias instructed and blessed his pupils. And so he was added to his fathers, because in all things, as it was written about him, he confirmed the sayings of the holy fathers by fulfilling them with his passion, resurrection, and ascension.

2:70 And he died in the one hundred and forty-sixth year, and was buried by his sons in the tombs of his fathers in Modin.

It has been previously stated that Mattathias, in the one hundred and forty-sixth year, when the nations were desecrating the temple of God, rose up, and his sons were zealous for the law of God and avenged the holy things. Now, too, Scripture reports that the same Mattathias died in the one hundred and forty-sixth year. From this it appears that he lived no more than one year together with his

sons after the beginning of their vengeance, and therefore he died. This number of years fits well with the mystery of the Lord's Passion, because after the fullness of time in which God decreed to send His Son, according to the testimony of the Law and the Gospel, in the sixth age of the world, the Savior, who was created on the sixth day, suffered on the sixth day, and perfectly redeemed and restored mankind by the price of His blood. Moreover, the fact that he is said to have been buried by his sons in the tomb of his fathers in Modin signifies that the memory of his passion is fittingly venerated daily by the faithful in the holy Church, where the place of judgment and fairness is, and that a beneficial mourning is celebrated there, because the holy men, inflamed by the desire for eternal life, strive in the chambers of their hearts to be moved by saving tears.

Chapter 3

Judas Maccabeus rose up in defense of Israel; he killed Apollonius, taking his sword. He also killed Seron, the commander of the army of Syria. Antiochus ordered Lysias to destroy Israel and utterly wipe it from the land.

3:1 And Judas, who was called Maccabeus, his son, arose in his place.

Upon the death of Mattathias, Judas Maccabeus, his son, succeeded him, whom all his brothers and all who had joined his father assisted. What, then, does this event suggest to us, except that our Redeemer, after completing his passion and resurrection, ascended into heaven, and, having sent the Holy Spirit from heaven, first appointed successors to himself in the preaching of the Gospel, namely the apostles, who are rightly considered by the name of Judas, that is, confessors, because of whom Luke says in the Gospel: They were always in the temple, praising and blessing the Lord (Luke 24:53). Therefore, all his brothers and all who had

joined his father assisted him: because men of lower rank, and all believers who came to faith through the doctrine of Christ, work together with the apostolic choir in the testimony of the Gospel according to their ability.

3:3a And Israel fought the battle with joy, and he increased the glory of his people.

For that apostolic assembly, filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, everywhere sincerely preached the word of God, rejoicing in tribulations and in hardships and in necessities, increasing and multiplying everywhere the number of believers in the Lord.

3:3b He put on armor like a giant.

For with the strength of faith he protected himself on all sides.

3:3c He girded himself with the weapons of war.

In accordance with that saying of the Apostle Paul, who taught, saying: Therefore stand, having bound your thighs with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shoed your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; in all things taking up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:14-17). And therefore, he fought against the enemies and protected the camps of the Church. And he became like a lion in his deeds, and like a lion's cub roaring in the hunt. Indeed, he was very similar to that lion of whom it is written: The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered (Rev. 5:5); and of whom the patriarch Jacob, by way of figure, in the mystical

blessing of his sons, among other things, says: Judah is a lion's cub; you have gone up, my son, to the prey: resting you have lain down as a lion, and as a lioness: who shall rouse him? (Gen. 49:9) That hunt, moreover, was spiritual, when spiritual hunters, with the nets of the Gospel, seized men for the faith. Therefore, then, Judas mystically pursued the wicked and those who disturbed his people, setting them aflame, because whether persecuting wicked men or evil spirits with such zeal and such action, they brought about even the slightest disturbance, kindling the flames of envy.

3:6-7a And his enemies were driven back by fear of him. And he exasperated many kings.

Namely, those who tried to resist the Gospel of Christ.

3:7b And he made Jacob rejoice in his works.

When he strengthened the people of believers with word and examples.

3:7c And his memory will be in blessing forever.

According to the words of the wise: The wisdom of the saints will be recounted by all peoples, and their praise will be proclaimed by the whole Church of the saints (Sirach 44, 39).

3:8 And he went through the cities of Judea, and destroyed the wicked among them.

For by examining the faith of the Churches, he struck with anathema the heretics who held views contrary to the true faith.

3:9 And he was named up to the ends of the earth.

For their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. (Ps. 18:5)

3:10 And Apollonius gathered the nations.

What is expressed by Apollonius except the cruelty of the Jews, who had gathered great strength from Samaria against Israel, because through the observance of the letter of the law they strove to fight against the faith of Christ, as if it were contrary to the commandments of God.

3:11a But Judas went out to meet Apollonius, struck him, and killed him.

Because Christ, in his apostles, overcoming the error of the Jews by the testimony of the law itself and the prophets, destroyed it, showing that the shadows of the law and the prophets prefigured the truth of the Gospel.

3:11b And many of them fell wounded.

Because, through envy, many of the Jews were struck down. The rest, however, fled. That is, they sought salvation for themselves from ecclesiastical doctrine. Judas received their spoils, as all the ceremonies of the law, which they had carnally observed, the disciples of Christ converted to spiritual use.

3:12 Judas took away the sword of Apollonius, and he fought with it all his days.

We understand the sword of Apollonius to be nothing other than the word of the law and the prophets, which the holy preachers, taking up, fight with all their days, when, taking away from the carnal people the history of the divine law, interpreted with spiritual meaning by apostolic tradition, they overcome the errors of all nations, and throughout all the days of this age the virtue of joy of the holy Church brings forth a most glorious victory.

3:13-14 And Seron, the leader of the army of Syria, heard that Judas had gathered a congregation and a church of the faithful with him, and said: I will make a name for myself, and I will be glorified in the kingdom, etc.

By Seron, the leader of the army of Syria, is signified the rulers of this world, who are rightly designated by the name Syria: for Syria is interpreted as exalted or moistening, because this world is cultivated by pride and boasts in luxury. Therefore, Seron plans to defeat Judas and those who are with him, as worldly arrogance plots against holy teachers and the faithful people, and gathers the camps of the wicked for this purpose, so that by the comfort of many who do harm he may oppress the innocent, trusting more in the power of the kingdom than in the virtue of God. But contrary to his expectation, it happens to him that the stone cut out of the mountain without hands (Dan. 2:45) will crush the statue of pride, will break gold and silver, bronze and iron, and the kingdom will be given to the people of the saints. The lion from the tribe of Judah has conquered, the root of David (Rev. 5:5), to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been given (Matt. 28:18).

3:16 And they drew near to Bethoron, and Judas went out to meet them with a few men.

It is rightly said that the army of Syria was approaching, because it carries out all its actions with uproar. But Bethoron is interpreted as the house of wrath. Judas, however, met them with a few, because the company of the saints responds to their enemies not with wrath, but with patience and humility, as they are commanded by the Lord saying: Be reconciled quickly with your adversary while you are on the way with him; but I say to you, do not resist evil; but if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, offer him the other also; and to him who wishes to resist with you in court and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well (Matt. 5:39).

3:17 But when they saw the army coming to meet them.

The words of those who are afraid express the weakness of certain subordinates, who, considering their own frailty more, fear disaster rather than have confidence in the Lord through the strength of faith; but the wisdom of the teachers, restraining that fear with sincere encouragements, gives them sure hope of the future help of God, who is the protector of all who faithfully trust in Him.

3:23 And Seron was crushed, and his army in his sight.

Because often the humility of the holy fathers lessens the fury of those who persecute, and the meekness of the humble overthrows the boldness of the proud. Therefore it is that Paul teaches, saying: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in doing so, you will heap coals of fire upon his head. Do not

be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:20-21).

3:24a And eight hundred men fell from them.

The total of those who fall is fittingly concluded by the number eight, because those who voluntarily yield to the truth, and by spiritual circumcision cut off from themselves all spiritual pleasures, strive to gather within themselves the virtues of the eight beatitudes.

3:24b But the others who fled came into the land of the Philistines.

For some of the persecutors, although they are in no way able to resist the truth, nevertheless prefer to take refuge in the hiding places of their errors rather than to yield and obey the beneficial counsel of spiritual teachers. And it is well said that they fled into the land of the Philistines. For Philistines is interpreted as double ruin; he who first falls by sin and then, despairing of himself, continues in evil, has a double ruin.

3:25 And the fear of Judah and his brothers fell, and dread upon all the nations around them, etc.

The fear of Judah and his brothers fell upon all the nations, when the power of Christ shone forth in his members through virtues and miracles.

3:26 And his name came to the king.

That the preaching of his gospel became known to the rulers of this world; and all nations spoke of the battles of Judah, as the nations of the whole world proclaim the victory of our Redeemer over death and the author of death.

3:27 But when King Antiochus heard, etc.

The passions of this historical Antiochus, by which he was immediately inflamed, namely, anger, desire, and pride, well express the character of the spiritual Antiochus, by which he most powerfully afflicts the whole world now through his members, but at the end of the world through himself; when there will be such tribulation as has not been before nor will be after (Matt. 24:21). He becomes angry when he hears of the glory of the saints, and their virtue and determination, and he gathers an army, giving it pay for a year, when by the advantages of the present life and ambitious honors he provokes various people to persecute the faithful: he chooses his nobles for their wicked lives, worldly pride, and greed, so that they may manage the affairs of the kingdom, when he appoints his ministers and followers to suggest the allurements of present things, and by provoking to earthly pleasures, draws those who consent to himself. By the name of sons, those are counted who are imitators of Christ. For he nourishes these through his nobles, when by corrupting them with various vices through the most wicked people, he makes them fuel for eternal fire. He especially commands his magistrates to root out the virtues of Israel and the remnants of Jerusalem, and to appoint foreigners in their place, because there is no device, no effort more characteristic of the Devil than to overthrow the Church of Christ, to weaken the strength of faith in the elect, and to introduce vices in place of virtues.

3:28 And Lysias chose Ptolemy, the son of Dorimini, and Nicanor and Gorgias, powerful men from among the king's friends.

What is signified by Lysias, if not worldly pride, which through three men, that is, three orders of persecutors, brings war upon the Church of Christ, namely through pagans, heretics, and false Christians? To these are added forty thousand men and seven thousand horsemen, to destroy Judas according to the king's command. What is signified by the number forty, if not the entirety of time which the Church endures persecution in the world? For there are four principal parts of the world, that is, East, West, North, and South, in which the Church, having been spread, stands. To gather it, the Son of God descended into the world; where before his passion he fasted for forty days and forty nights, showing our temptation in his flesh, which he stooped to take from our mortality, wishing to share it. Therefore, from the hour of his death until the dawn of his resurrection, there are forty hours, if the ninth hour itself is counted. After the resurrection, he wished to be with his disciples on this earth for no more than forty days: therefore, their lives still mingled with human conversation, and with them he received the food of mortals, although now no longer to die; so that through those forty days he might signify that he would fulfill what he permitted by his hidden presence, when he said: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:20). By the number seven, however, by which the thousands of horsemen are described, nothing else is shown but the fullness of persecutions; because just as by the number seven the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit is shown, so also when, on the contrary, it is read in the Gospel that the evil spirit brought with him seven spirits more wicked than himself into a man (Matt. 12:45), and elsewhere it is read that the Lord cast out seven demons from the sinful woman (Luke 8:2), therefore all persecutors, rightly instigated by the Devil, are united

for this purpose, that the Church of Christ may be destroyed, and the confessors of almighty God compelled to blaspheme; and this they accomplish not sluggishly, but with all their strength.

3:40 And they went forth to go with all their strength, etc.

What is signified by Emmaus except lovers of this world, who through desire for the age neglect to have friendship with God? Therefore it is written: Whoever wishes to be a friend of this world is constituted an enemy of God (James 4:4); and John says: Whoever loves the world, the love of God is not in him (1 Jn. 2:15). And rightly are such people called by this name. For Emmaus is interpreted as "rejected people," and indeed those who prefer love of the present age to the love of God are worthy of rejection. Therefore Truth itself says in the Gospel: Whoever loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me (Matt. 10:37). Nor is it inappropriate that Emmaus is said to be in a plain, because broad and spacious is the way that leads to death, and many enter through it (Matt. 7:13).

3:41 And the merchants of the regions heard their name.

These merchants, who seek the service of the Hebrews, I believe signify none better than the evil spirits, who desire the destruction of the faithful, and strive to take away from us heavenly glory through earthly desire, and to turn the liberty we have in the grace of Christ into the worship and servitude of the Devil. Therefore, it is read in the Gospel that the Devil himself, taking our head, that is, the mediator between God and men, up to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and, tempting him, said: All these things will I give you if you will fall down and worship me (Matt. 4:9). And it is rightly said that the armies of Syria and the land of foreigners were added to them,

because all the lustful and those unfamiliar to the true worship of God are joined to our enemies, and by plotting our destruction, they become collaborators of unclean spirits.

3:42 And Judah and his brothers saw that evils had multiplied, and armies were approaching their borders; and they understood the words of the king, which he had commanded the people to carry out for their destruction and annihilation.

As the persecutors raged and prepared battle against the faithful, they themselves, following the example of Judah and his brothers, were stirred up all the more to increase in faith and advance in virtues, according to the words of the Psalmist: While the wicked man is proud, the poor man is set on fire (Ps. 9:23). Therefore, such should be the intention of the servants of God: to fight for their people and His saints, because for the preservation of the faith of the Christian religion and for the salvation of their brothers, they ought to fight earnestly against spiritual wickedness and against evil men, and to implore help with constant prayer, because He is the one of whom it is written: A helper in times of need, in tribulation; to you alone the poor man has been left, and you will be the helper of the orphan (Ps. 10:14), because with fatherly compassion He considers the labor and sorrow of His own, He will break the arm of the sinner and the wicked (Ibid), He judges for the orphan and the humble, so that man may no longer exalt himself upon the earth (Ibid.).

3:46 And they gathered together and came to Mizpah against Jerusalem, because Mizpah was a place of prayer, formerly in Israel, etc.

Those who had gathered to fight against the enemies came to Mizpah against Jerusalem. And what does Mizpah, which is interpreted as judgment, signify if not the Old Testament; Mizpah was a place of prayer, which always looks forward to the New Testament, and the Testament provides for the Gospel of Christ. For it is necessary that the spiritual soldiers of God turn the intention of their hearts there, so that they may be instructed by divine reading on how they ought to fight against spiritual enemies. For Mizpah was a place of prayer. Not, however, in Israel; because divine oracles were first made known to us through the books of the law and the prophets, then through the Gospel. They fasted that day. Because they devoted themselves to purity. They clothed themselves in sackcloth and put ashes on their heads. Because they worthily serve God by doing penance for their sins, which they have contracted through human weakness. And they tore their garments. When they discipline the body and degrade carnal desires within themselves. And what follows, because,

3:48 They opened the books of the law, from which the nations examined the likeness of their idols,

showing that they demonstrate the memory of divine precepts by good deeds, those who are found worthy to serve as soldiers. For the law of the Lord is blameless, converting the souls (Ps. 19:7) of the elect, it criticizes the evil deeds of the faithless, and despises the worship of idols, and opposes every work of wickedness. They put on priestly ornaments, those who worthily perform the duties of the ecclesiastical priesthood; they give first fruits and tithes, those who attribute the beginning and perfection of good works to God; they raise up Nazirites who have fulfilled their days, those who strive to offer a pleasing life to God at all times through the purity of chastity; and he cried out with a loud voice to heaven, who by sincere prayers and good deeds provoke the Divinity to

mercy. For just as the cry of the wicked, which they utter through blasphemy and evil deeds, provokes God to anger; so the confession and faith of the saints, which works through love, at all times appeases the divine majesty.

3:55 And after this Judas appointed leaders of the people, tribunes and centurions.

He calls tribunes those who were in charge of a thousand soldiers (whom the Greeks call χιλιάρχους); centurions, those who were in charge of a hundred; decurions *(ancient Roman officials)*, those who were in charge of ten. For holy preachers arrange their subjects so that nothing disordered may be found among them, but that they may fulfill the service of Christ in a rational manner. Therefore Paul says to his hearers: Let all things among you be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40); and again: No one, he says, will be crowned unless he has competed lawfully (2 Tim. 2:5).

3:56 And he said to those who were building houses, and marrying wives, and planting vineyards, etc.

Therefore it is written in Deuteronomy: A fearful man and one of a timid heart shall not go out to war; let him go and return to his house, lest he make the hearts of his brothers fear, as he himself is terrified by fear. (Deut. 20:8) By these words, he teaches that no one can take up the profession of contemplation or the army of spiritual warfare, who still fears to be stripped of earthly works, lest, through weakness of mind, he return again to his former filth, and by his example turn others away from evangelical perfection and weaken the strength of the faithful: therefore, such men are ordered, departing from the battle, to return to their house, because they cannot fight the battles of the Lord with a double heart. For a

man who is double-minded is unstable in all his ways. Such as these ought not even to begin the renewal; for whom it is better to remain in active life than, lukewarmly pursuing contemplation, to involve themselves in greater danger; it is better not to vow than to vow and not fulfill. Similarly, he is suspended from such warfare who has taken a wife, who has planted a vineyard, etc. For the servant of a wife cannot serve in the divine army, nor can he attain to the pursuit of contemplation who is still fixed in the delight of the flesh. No one, says the Apostle, serving as a soldier for God, entangles himself in worldly affairs, so that he may please him to whom he has given proof (2 Tim. 2:4).

3:57 And they moved the camp, and set up at the south of Emmaus.

It is rightly said that the army of Judah set up camp to the south of Emmaus, because the soldiers of Christ, when they prepare to do battle against their enemies, choose to inspire themselves more with the warmth of faith than to grow numb with the cold of unbelief.

3:58 And Judas said: Fix yourselves and be mighty sons, be ready in the morning, so that you may fight against these nations which have gathered to destroy us.

Such should be the teaching of holy preachers and such their incitement, that they stir up the minds of their listeners, and strengthen their hearts to resist the Devil and his army, entrusting the hope of victory to God alone.

Chapter 4

After Gorgias and Lysias were defeated, Judas purified the temple; concerning the dedication of the altar and the adornment of the temple.

4:1 And Gorgias took up five thousand men and chosen cavalry.

Gorgias took five thousand into his army, just as the Devil strives to gather to himself those who are given over to the five carnal senses of the body through the allurements of pleasure; he takes a thousand cavalry with him, as he intends to conduct all his warfare in pride and contempt of the commandments of God, so that he may overcome the ranks of the repentant party in this, when he persuades them to transgress the commandments of God: For the beginning of all sin is pride (Sirach 10:13); where the author of death finds ruin for himself and his followers. And it is rightly said that he moved his camp by night; because he desires to exercise all his wickedness through the blindness of mind in those subject to him, so that they may in no way foresee what kind of ruin threatens them from consenting to sin.

4:2 And their sons who were from the citadel were those leaders.

This citadel does not signify the height of virtues, but the excellence of vain glory: for they offer leadership to sinners who dare to rise up in pride; and evil spirits can also be seen in these leaders, who belong to the one who said: I will ascend into heaven and set my throne in the north, and I will be like the Most High (Isa. 14:13). For these leaders of iniquity, agreeing among themselves, never cease to draw others into the pit and abyss of crimes.

4:3 And Judas heard, and he himself and his mighty men arose.

Note, reader, that the opposing party which was joined to Gorgias arranges all its war preparations at night; and Judas and his followers do so during the day: for the workers of wickedness and executors of errors are always defiled, rulers of darkness hating the light of divine commandments and loving the obscurity of worldly pleasures. Therefore, as Paul says: Those who sleep, sleep at night; and those who are drunk, are drunk at night; but we, who are of the day, are not children of the night nor of darkness (1 Thess. 5:7-8). Truly Judas, that is, the confessor of God, arranges all the gear of war in the light of faith and the meditation on the law of God; therefore, he appears in the field with only three thousand men, namely with those who act confidently not in worldly power, but in the faith of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, striving with simplicity of mind to lead an honest life in this world.

4:12 And the foreigners lifted up their eyes.

As the enemies came from the opposite direction into battle, the allies of Judah sounded the trumpet, and the nations were crushed, because through the sound of the trumpet the voice of preaching is expressed; the soldiers of Judah sound the trumpet, when the preachers of Christ proclaim the Gospel throughout the whole world. Therefore the enemies are crushed, because the nations are subjected to the faith of Christ, and likewise the spiritual enemies are crushed by the power of Christ, and, slain by the sword of the Holy Spirit, are plunged into the depths of the abyss.

4:15a And they pursued them as far as Gezeron, and as far as the plains of Idumaea, and Azotus, and Jamnia.

The names of the places up to which Judas pursued his enemies demonstrate the effectiveness of his virtue; for Gezeron is interpreted as “near my light”; Idumaea, “red” or “earthly”; Azotus, “paternal fire”; Jamnia, “sea” or “his right hand.” And what is signified by Gezeron except the light of faith, and by Idumaea except the gentile nations? But what is signified by paternal fire except the ardor of love; and by Jamnia, except the depth of knowledge and the effect of good works? Therefore, the company of holy teachers pursues the gentile people so long, until it leads them from the error of paganism to the light of faith, kindles in them the fire of love, and urges them to the meditation on the divine law and the pursuit of good works. For this persecution is salutary, and the destruction is beneficial. Therefore it is added:

4:15b And three thousand men of them fell.

For just as there were three thousand of the companions of Judah who were being pursued, so also three thousand fell from the side of the enemies; they fell not so that they might be utterly destroyed, but so that, having been raised up after their fall, they might stand better: because, filled with faith in the Holy Trinity, they strove to attain the fellowship of those whom they recognized they had persecuted with a virtuous spirit.

4:16 And Judas returned, and his army following him, etc.

Likewise, the soldiers of Christ should by no means be quickly confident of victory when war is imminent, but ought to fight as long as necessary, until they are certain of the destruction of their spiritual enemies. For when, by pursuing sinners or unbelievers, they have converted them to repentance for their sins and to faith in Christ, which works through love to produce good deeds, then

they must gather their spoils, that is, make use of their knowledge and share in the industry of their virtuous labor. For in gold we may understand knowledge, in silver eloquence, in hyacinth heavenly conduct, in purple the shedding of blood through martyrdom. Then indeed we gather these riches fruitfully, we find them acceptable in true faith, if, however, we transfer this victory to spiritual enemies. Then we ought to be secure, when after the end of this present life there is no longer any need to fear the snares of enemies. For then we gather the spoils profitably, when we receive from Christ the rewards worthy of our labor. Therefore it is rightly said that Judas exhorted his companions not to crave the spoils while the fierce wars of the enemies were still threatening; but when the enemies were utterly defeated, then he returned with his men to gather the spoils of the camps, because it is necessary for every preacher to warn his listeners to beware of the darts of enemies as long as it is a time of war. But when the time of peace comes, namely, that peace which the Savior promised to his disciples, saying: My peace I give to you (Jn. 14:27), then both superiors and subjects together will have eternal joy from the reward received, because they will no longer fear the pain of further labors and tears; then, because it is the time to sing praises to God their helper. Therefore it is written:

> ***4:24 And having turned, they sang a hymn and blessed God in heaven, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever.***

There is great salvation in Israel when the number of believers in the Lord among the peoples increases, who recognize the Savior by faith, confess with their mouths, and glorify Him together in one work. Or otherwise, then there will be great salvation in Israel, when in the Church of Christ there will be no hardship. And it is notably added, on that day; on the day, indeed, of the resurrection,

because the most noble bride will be joined to the bridegroom in the heavenly kingdom above, when all the saints in the sight of God will rejoice not only in the rest of their souls, but also in the immortality of their bodies. Where it is written:

4:26 However, whoever among the foreigners escaped, came and reported to Lysias all that had happened.

Finally, the foreigners who escaped announce to Lysias the victory of Judas, because some, not yet of the saints, are seized as most beneficial spoils for Christ through the ministries of the teachers, and, though unwilling, because compelled by the truth, they announce the glory of Christ to their instructors by whom they are nurtured unto death. For Lysias, which is interpreted as "generating," signifies the powerful of the world, who, although they are generated, have not yet deserved to be regenerated by the baptism of Christ. Therefore, these soldiers, hearing of Christ's victory, are discouraged and lose heart, because things did not turn out in Israel as they wished, nor as the king commanded. For their will was such that the preaching of the Gospel by the holy teachers would not prevail, nor would the multitude of those believing in the Lord increase; and they also knew that such things would please their rulers, that is, the unclean spirits; because in the blasphemous images of idols, venerated by men with divine worship, they persuaded them not to receive the faith of Christ, but they did not prevail, because the Father reveals the glory of His Son far and wide among all nations.

4:28 And in the following year he gathered sixty thousand chosen men.

And Lysias selected sixty thousand men and five thousand horsemen to wage war against Israel, with all the power of this

world, which is divided into six ages; through the five bodily senses, the prince of this age, with the rulers of these present darknesses inciting, strives to overcome the soldiers of Christ by loosening them through various vices, and through evil men he plots the destruction of the good. But Judas confronted them with ten thousand men, because the army of our King is stronger than the others in this: that it strives in all things to obey the divine commandments, and by sending constant prayers to the Lord, it is strengthened by His hand, in whose power it especially trusts; and it persists in battle until its enemies and the opposing spiritual weapons are utterly slain by the sword. Therefore, in the prayer of Judas, it is added:

4:33 Drive them out with the sword, you who love Him.

There are five books of the law of God, and, as we have previously said, there are five senses in the body. For whoever, according to the teaching of the law, restrains the lust of the flesh, turning away his eyes so that they do not look upon vanity, stopping his ears so that they do not hear a slanderous tongue (Ps. 119:37), and obscene songs against worldly things, by which, when frequently heard, the inner man is defiled; whoever restrains his sense of smell and taste so that he does not use them for the lure of pleasures; whoever keeps his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit, turns away from evil and does good, seeks peace and pursues it (Ps. 34:13-14), this person, overcoming his enemies, will gain the most beneficial victory and will rejoice in the greatest triumph. But spiritual Lysias, although once, twice, or even three times crushed and put to flight, nevertheless does not cease from the wickedness he has undertaken, but revived, he again renews the battles. Therefore it is written:

4:35-36 But when Lysias learned of the flight of his men, etc. But Judas said, etc.

It is well said that Judas, after the enemies were crushed and the wars had been calmed for a time, urged his men to cleanse and renew the holy places, because the holy teachers are greatly concerned that, whenever the Church entrusted to them has been harmed by enemies, it should be restored again to its former state of holy conduct. According to the spiritual interpretation, it is necessary that every faithful person should cleanse his own mountain (which we may rightly understand as selected by the name Mount Zion, because Zion is interpreted as "watchtower," and blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8), if anything in it has been defiled by the deceit of the enemy, with holy and watchful attention, until it is fully renewed. For there we can understand both the deserted sanctification, the profaned altar, and the burnt gates; because there the sacrifice of praise was offered to God on the altar of faith, and the entrance to heavenly life was contemplated. In the courts, however, weeds grow, when in human hearts a multitude of unnecessary thoughts is generated.

4:38 Pastophoria, he says, ***saw the ruins.***

Pastophoria in Greek are called chambers, or rooms, in which the Levites kept watch in the courts of the house of the Lord, whose mention is made in the last vision of the prophet Ezekiel. Therefore, pastophoria are destroyed when the secrets of the mind are torn apart by illicit desires; but above all, it is necessary that all these things be most urgently purified through repentance for sins, amendment of conduct, and devout prayers to the Lord. Therefore, it is rightly written about the army of Judah that when they saw ***the sanctification deserted, they tore their garments and mourned with great weeping***. ***(verse 4:39)***

4:41a Then Judas appointed men to fight against those who were in the citadel, until the holy things were cleansed, etc.

It is rightly said that ***Judas appointed men to fight against those who were in the citadel (4:41b)*** until the holy things were cleansed, because this is what our Redeemer ordains through his preachers: that his soldiers should fight diligently against those who dwell in the citadel of pride, that is, men puffed up with the spirit of arrogance, or swelling with pride like evil spirits, until they purge the hearts of the elect from every stain of iniquity. ***And they chose priests without blemish, having the will to follow the law of God, and they cleansed the holy things, (4:42)*** because, after removing from ecclesiastical office those who bore the leprosy of error or the stain of crimes, they chose as ministers of the word those who were willing and morally upright in faith, so that the assemblies of the holy Church might be made free from every infection of error. Indeed, it is further stated that they took the stones of contamination to a clean place, because heretics who did not wish to become precious stones through a life of right faith and sound doctrine, having been struck with anathema and cast out, were shown to all to be reprobate, etc.

4:44 And he considered what to do about the altar of burnt offerings, which had been profaned, etc.

The altar of burnt offerings is pure faith, pure doctrine, and the pure conduct of the ministers of Christ. But this altar had been desecrated by heretical depravity or the horror of crimes; now it had to be destroyed, that is, removed from the dignity of the priesthood, lest perhaps it be a disgrace to the holy Church to have corrupt and criminal teachers who have been seduced by

diabolical cunning. Therefore, the Lord says to the disciples in the Gospel: You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its flavor, with what shall it be salted? It is good for nothing anymore except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. (Matt. 5:13) Of this, too, Paul, writing to Titus, says: A man who is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid, knowing that such a one is perverted and sins, being condemned by his own judgment. (Titus 3:10-11) Therefore also, to certain offenders he says: Because of you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles. (Rom. 2:24) Therefore, after the mystical altar has been therefore removed, those mystical stones must be set aside on the mountain of the house in a suitable place, until the coming prophet responds, saying that those who sin must be brought under penance, until through holy teachers, a fitting sanctification is carried out for the crime committed. But in their place, whole stones according to the law must be substituted, so that a new altar may be made according to what was before, because men sound in the Catholic faith, filled with the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, holy in good morals, must be appointed in the place of those who have fallen from rule; according to the authorities of the divine law, so that without reproach in newness of life and the standard of righteousness, the ministry may be exhibited to God in the holy Church, which Christ acquired for himself as a bride at the price of his blood, and not having spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:27).

4:48 And they built the holy things, and those that were next to the house on the inside: and they consecrated the temple and the courts, etc.

Holy preachers build holy things within the house inside and the temple, when they adorn the subject people both inwardly with the knowledge of sound faith, and outwardly with upright conduct; they consecrate the courts when, by initiating those newly coming

to the faith with divine rituals, they dedicate them. They make new holy vessels when they render the hearts of human beings suitable for receiving the word of God. They bring the lampstand, and the altar of incense, and the table into the temple when they awaken in the Church of God the light of spiritual teaching, the purity of holy prayer, and the meditation on the holy Scriptures. In the lampstand, therefore, in which lamps ought to shine, we can rightly discern the word of evangelical teaching, in which holy teachers, kindled by the fire of the Holy Spirit, ought to shine, so that those who enter may see the light.

Where Truth itself says in the Gospel: No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel, but on a lampstand, so that it may give light to all who are in the house (Matt. 5:15). By the altar of incense we can understand nothing better than the perfect life of the saints, from which there daily rises the fragrance of virtues and of holy prayer in the sight of the Most High. We therefore understand the table of the Lord as nothing other than Holy Scripture, in which the perfection of souls consists. But when it is said that they hung the veils and completed all the work that they had done, in the hanging of the veils is expressed the concealment of mysteries. For the mysteries of the divine law are not to be laid open to all in every respect, but according to the capacity of each person's understanding and the progress of knowledge and virtues. Therefore the Lord commanded the apostles, saying: Do not give what is holy to dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine (Matt. 7:6); and Paul says to his untrained disciples: I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able, nor indeed are you even now able (1 Cor. 3:2). Concerning the knowledge of the perfect, therefore, he says elsewhere: And we, with unveiled face, contemplate the glory of the Lord, being transformed into the same image, as by the Spirit of the Lord, etc. (2 Cor. 3:18)

Therefore, they bring to completion all the works that must be done in the house of God, they who, by faith, word, and deed,

strive according to the proper order to fulfill all the commandments of the Lord; nor is anything lacking in perfection where the human will in all things obeys the divine will.

4:52 And before morning they rose on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, etc.

Josephus narrates this renewal in this way, saying (Antiq. 12.10): "On the twenty-fifth day of the month Casleu, which the Macedonians call Appelleon, they lit the lamps on the lampstand and offered up the burnt sacrifices which they presented on the new altar." These things happened after three years, on the very day on which their religion had been changed to the profane practice of their idols. For the temple, destroyed by Antiochus, remained so for three years: for in the one hundred and fifteenth year the deed was done in the temple on the twenty-fifth day of the month Appelleon; in the one hundred and forty-eighth year, in the one hundred and fifty-fourth Olympiad. The desolation of the temple came to pass according to Daniel's preface, which he had foretold in the eighteenth year beforehand, through which he indicated that the Macedonians would destroy it. But Judas, together with his fellow-citizens, celebrated sacrifices for the renewal of the temple for eight days, omitting no kind of delight, feeding them with the most precious banquets. They glorified God with praises and psalms and took mutual joy in songs. For the renewal of the solemn observances, after the religion had been re-established for a long time, the guardians of the Law decreed that later generations should celebrate this renewal of the temple for eight days. And so from that time until now we celebrate this feast, calling it "Lights," because beyond our expectation this splendid light of the religion to be observed appeared to us; mystically, however, the renewal of the temple is the conversion of people to repentance for sins, who had been stained by certain

errors and crimes. For then it is time for all the faithful to sing, rejoice, exult, shout for joy, and give praise, when they see their neighbors, by correcting their ways and meditating on the Law of God, restoring within themselves what previously they had destroyed through negligence.

And so the holy Gospel relates that the Savior said (Luke 15:7) that in heaven joy arises over one sinner who repents; if over one, how much more will there be rejoicing over many who are converted to the true worship of God. For, as it is written: In the multitude of the people is the glory of the prince (Prov. 14:28); namely of that prince who wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4).

4:59 And Judas and his brothers, and the whole Church of Israel, established that the day of the dedication of the altar should be celebrated in its proper seasons.

This feast the Savior Himself is read in the Gospel to have honored by His preaching, where it is written: "The Feast of Dedication was held in Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon," etc. (Jn. 10:22). From this it must be understood that this Feast of Dedication which we have learned about from the Gospel reading does not refer to the first dedication of the temple, but to the last; which is easily conditional from the fact that it is said to have taken place in winter. For its first dedication, by Solomon, took place in the autumn; the middle one, by Zerubbabel and the priest Jeshua, in the spring; but the last, by Judas Maccabeus, took place in the winter, when it is specifically read that it was decreed that this same dedication should be recalled every year in memory by solemn rites, as we understand from the above-mentioned passage of the Gospel that this was observed up to the time of the Lord's Incarnation. This was the reason for the second and third dedications. For Solomon

completed in seven years the work of the temple which he built for the Lord, and in the eighth year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, which we call October, he dedicated it with great glory. But after four hundred and thirty years the Chaldeans went up against this temple, and having destroyed the city of Jerusalem, they led the people of Israel captive into Babylon; who, after seventy years, under the rule of the Persians, were sent back to their homeland. Then the temple was rebuilt over forty-six years, and on the third day of the twelfth month, which we call March, the work was fully brought to completion. At that time indeed there presided over the work the most heroic leaders of the people, as we have said, Zerubbabel of the royal line, and Jeshua, the high priest; and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah aided them, strengthening the hearts of the people against the plots of those who tried to hinder the work. Then, after about three hundred and fifty-six years, the most wicked king of the Greeks, Antiochus, having deceitfully seized Jerusalem, defiled that same temple with the filth of idols, taking away and breaking the golden altar of the Lord, the table of the showbread, the lampstand of light, and the other things mentioned above.

But Judas Maccabeus, since he was of priestly lineage, having gathered an army of the righteous and taking up arms against the generals of Antiochus, drove them out of Judea, put an end to the most cruel persecution, and, cleansing the temple from the images of idols, made new altars again and the other vessels and ornaments and placed them in the temple, and dedicated them together with the temple. He purified and renewed it on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which among us is called December, and it is beyond doubt that it belongs to winter. And he established a decree, as we have said before, that every year the day of the Encaenia, that is, of the renewal and dedication of the temple, be celebrated with devout festivity, as this place now bears witness.

All these things indeed, as the Apostle teaches (1 Cor. 10:11), were done as a figure of us, and were of course written for our sake, and must therefore be examined by us more carefully according to a spiritual understanding. For King Solomon, whose name is interpreted "peaceful," typically signifies our Redeemer himself; of whom Isaiah says: "His dominion will be multiplied, and there will be no end of peace." (Isa. 9:7) The temple that he built is his Catholic Church, which he gathers together from all believers throughout the world, as though from living stones, into one structure compacted by his faith and love. That the temple was built in seven years signifies that throughout the whole duration of this age, which unfolds in seven days, the holy structure of the Church never ceases to grow. That it was dedicated in the eighth year, and that very famous and great earnestness was celebrated by King Solomon for all the sons of Israel at the time of the completed dedication, mystically suggests that, when the number of the elect is perfected at the end of the world, there will be the secure festivity of the long-desired immortality; and when the miracle of the universal resurrection has been accomplished, then all who belong to the kingdom of the true peaceful King, that is, of Solomon, will at once enter with him into the eternal joys of the heavenly homeland.

For since our Lord wished to rise from the dead on the eighth day, that is, after the seventh day of the sabbath, the number eight fittingly signifies also the future feast of our resurrection. The fact that the temple, once burned by enemies, is again rebuilt by the Lord's mercy; that, having been defiled by idolaters, it is once more cleansed by the aid of heavenly devotion, this suggests the various events of the holy Church, which is now oppressed by the persecution of unbelievers, and now, when the persecutors are removed and it is given greater freedom, serves more peacefully, under the Lord's guidance, in bondage as a handmaid: now in some of its members it is endangered by the snares of the ancient

enemy, and now, through the diligence of faithful teachers, those whom it seemed for a time to be losing it receives back, already humiliated, through repentance.

But the fact that the second temple was built in forty-six years spiritually refers to the signification of the Lord's body, which He took from the Virgin; about which He Himself says to the Jews: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn. 2:19), because, indeed, when His body was destroyed by the Passion, He Himself raised it to life on the third day. Moreover, physicians report that the human body is formed on the forty-sixth day after the beginning of conception, in the differentiation of the limbs; and it was not done by chance, but providentially arranged by God, that the temple should be built in that number of years in which, by the same number of days, the body of the Lord, prefigured by the temple, had to be brought to completion in the virginal womb.

But the fact that it has been ordained that the Dedication be celebrated every year certainly reminds us that, always keeping in mind the remembrance of the Lord's resurrection, which we believe has already taken place, we should so conduct ourselves in hope of our own future resurrection that we may deserve to rise not for judgment, but, as the Lord has promised to those who have done good, to rise to life.

4:60 And in that time they built the mountain Zion, and all around it high walls and strong towers, etc.

The holy teachers build the mountain Zion when, by word and example, they stir the holy Church to progress in virtues; they construct high walls all around when they strengthen it on every side with the summit of the Catholic faith and with the work of prayers; they raise strong towers when they command that all hope

be placed in the goodness of God. So that the nations may not trample it as the former mountain; so that the wickedness of evil spirits or the hatred of perverse men may no longer be able to harm them.

4:61 "And he stationed," he says, ***"the army there so that they might guard him," etc.***

The army is placed on Zion to guard him, when the multitude of ministers, for the preservation of the law of God, is employed in the Church for the rite of heavenly sacraments. They fortify him to protect Bethzur, when by strong exhortations they stir up ecclesiastical persons to observe divine worship in an orderly way (for Bethzur is interpreted as "house of the strong"). So that the people may have fortification against the face of Idumaea. That is, so that it may preserve loyalty of faith against enemies and against the stubbornness of a raging world.

Chapter 5

Judas puts to flight the peoples who want to destroy Israel. About Timotheus, the leader of the Ammonites. Simon, sent by his brother, conquers the nations. About the wars of Judah against Timotheus, etc.

5:1 And it came to pass that when the nations round about heard that the altar and the sanctuary had been rebuilt as before, they became very angry, etc.

The nations are provoked when they see the work of the worship of God renewed, because both visible and invisible enemies, who gasp in the heat of envy against the progress of faith and virtues, grow angry, are tormented, and persecute the servants of God,

wanting to reduce them to nothing when they see them desiring to keep the observance of good works on the altar of true faith. Therefore it is said that they planned to destroy the race of Jacob who were among them, and began to kill them, because as the Gospel of Christ became revealed in the world and all received faith in God, the persecutors were racked with torment and tried by punishing them with sufferings to turn them away from it. Likewise, spiritual enemies, when they fall upon see some who, out of sloth and negligence, now wish to restore themselves in the worship of devotion, undertake to kill them with the sword of sinfulness and to slaughter them as if in the death of sinners. But Judas, bravely resisting the enemies with the shield of faith, conquers the sons of Esau in Idumea, because the company of holy teachers, slaying idolaters, who are extremely harsh with the thorns of vices and most foul with deadly sacrifices and worldly lust, by the sword of the spirit, makes those who were opposed become subject and turns enemies into friends.

5:3 And those who were in Acrabathane, because they surrounded the Israelites, etc.

Those who lived in the aforementioned places, that is Acrabathane and Bean, and who, surrounding the children of Israel, became for them a snare and an offense, lying in wait against them, signify the Jews and the heretics, who always devise scandals and plots against the Church of God. But such people are shut up by Judah and his companions in their towers, when in the schemes of their pride they are taken through the skill of learned teachers, and their errors are anathematized; whose towers are burned with fire along with all who are in them, when the authors of crimes and the inventors of errors are even now consumed by the enthusiasm of the divine word for their sins, and in the future judgment, unless

they have previously performed fitting repentance, they will be burned in the fire of eternal vengeance.

5:6 And he went over to the sons of Ammon, and found a strong hand and a numerous people, etc.

By the sons of Ammon, which is interpreted "son of my people," are signified schismatics and heretics, who once seemed to be sons of the holy Church, but now, withdrawing and casting themselves into error, have become sons of the Devil. Therefore the apostle John says: They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would certainly have remained with us (1 Jn. 2:19). These have Timothy as their leader, that is, the heresiarchs, who, according to the interpretation of his name, are praised among them, but according to the truth of understanding are by no means found to be among us. Timothy is interpreted "with benefits"; but this is an opinion held by the deceived about the heresiarchs, whereas by us they are called "sorcerers," because by their evil deeds they mix the poison of error for their hearers. Against them Judas rises up, and, being superior, gains the victory and, by destroying their errors, returns with triumph into Judea, that is, into the confession of the praise of God, of his enemies.

5:9 And the nations who are in Gilead were gathered together against the Israelites who were in their borders, to destroy them, etc.

The nations who are in Gilead gather together against the Israelites to destroy them, when a multitude of heretics and schismatics comes together for this purpose: that, with the testimonies of Scripture corrupted according to their own understanding, they may attack the Catholic faith, which endures through the ages. For Gilead is interpreted "heap of testimony," and the name is well

suited to those who devote themselves to the meditation of the Scriptures.

But the Israelites flee into the stronghold, just as all the faithful flee for refuge to the truth of faith; and they ask that help be brought to them by Judah and his brothers, because by the Gospel of Christ, through the ministry of holy preachers, they desire to be defended against the spiritual Timothy, of whom we spoke above, and his companions.

But what the Israelites complain about regarding the killing of their men and their captivity shows that among the faithful there is no small grief of the nations, when they saw some of their own withdraw from the truth and fall into the error of the wicked, etc.

5:14 And behold, other messengers came from Galilee with their garments torn, announcing these words, etc.

Those who gathered from various foreign places to destroy the people of God clearly signify the nations of the Gentiles, who, still in unbelief, stir up wars and persecutions against Christians. But when the words that the different groups had brought to Judas and his companions were heard, a great church assembly met to consider what they should do about their brothers who were in tribulation and were being attacked by enemies; for the concern ***and highest care of the whole holy Church is how it may defend its children against various enemies, (5:16)*** that is, Jews, pagans, heretics, and schismatics. In this matter also, with prudent counsel and every effort, it takes action together with those who seem to be more learned and stronger in faith and in the practice of virtues, as to how it may resist the enemies and suitably defend its own.

5:17 And Judas said to Simon his brother, etc.

Just as the assaults of the Church by its enemies are many, so also the battles of spiritual warriors ought to be distinct. Therefore Simon goes into Galilee with three thousand men, as is shown in what follows, in order to free his brothers; but Judas and Jonathan go into the land of Gilead with eight thousand. And what is signified by Simon, who is sent into Galilee, that is, "the circle," if not the preachers who are directed to the nations? These, going with three thousand men, that is, with faith in the Holy Trinity, prepare to go against their adversaries and strive, through evangelical preaching, to cast down the enemies and to set free believers. But Judas and Jonathan represent those teachers who, preaching the word of God in Judea, strive to overcome either the Jews or also the heretics, who misuse the testimonies of Scripture, by means of the truth of sound understanding. And note that only Simon with his men is sent against the Gentiles, whereas two go with a greater number against the Jews and the heretics: because among the Gentiles only idolatry together with pagan error had to be overcome, but among the Jews and the heretics both an old-established practice and a new superstition had to be corrected by the spiritual knowledge of the two Testaments. Here eight thousand men are taken, because there it is taught both that the circumcision of the Law must be spiritually observed and that the resurrection of Christ must be truly believed.

5:21 And Simon went into Galilee and engaged in many battles with the nations, etc.

Simon engages in many battles with the nations when holy preachers throughout the whole world strive to overthrow idolatry and the confused errors of the nations; and the nations are crushed before their face when they lay aside their stubbornness in resisting the Gospel of God. He pursued them as far as the gate of Ptolemais, when, in their own devices by which, through vain

studies, they were plotting to oppose the word of God, they are overcome by truth itself, taken captive, and brought into subjection by the confession of the right faith. Where it is aptly added:

5:22 And about three thousand men of the Gentiles fell.

They, falling from the most wicked state of pride into repentance for their sins, by rising again through right faith are found worthy to be raised up into the state of good works. Their spoils Simon receives, when the Catholic teacher strives to convert entirely to the service of God whatever they have worked out by the knowledge of letters or the investigation of truth; where very many of those who had been trained in the liberal arts while living among the pagans… *[something is missing in the manuscript]*… But those who were in Galilee, with their wives and children and all that they had with them, he brought into Judaea with great joy, when, by the teaching of the Gospel, rescuing any Catholics who were entangled in the affairs of the world, he teaches them with all concern and all effort to desire the things that are of God.

5:24 And Judas Maccabeus and Jonathan his brother crossed the Jordan, etc.

Against those who were hindering the captive Jews in the region of Gilead, Judas Maccabeus and his brother Jonathan, having been sent with their companions, crossed the Jordan and went a three days' journey through the desert. In the same way, holy preachers, sent into the world to summon people to the faith of Christ and to overthrow Jewish and schismatic errors, first cross the Jordan, that is, they teach that one must first pass by the sacrament of baptism from the darkness of unbelief into the grace of Christ, with Truth itself testifying that unless one is born again of water and the Holy

Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (Jn. 3:5) Then they go a three days' journey through the desert, because they affirm that the faith of the Holy Trinity, which all the faithful profess in baptism, must be observed with good works for the whole time of their sojourn in this world. But the fact that the Nabathaeans met them peacefully and related what had happened to their brothers in the region of Gilead signifies that the words of the holy prophets bring timely comfort to holy teachers, when by their testimony they make clear all the torments that believers in are going to suffer. For "Nabathaeans" is interpreted as "those who prophesy," and they foretell with true prophecy the errors that the sons of perdition are plotting to set up against the truth of the Gospel of Christ. Therefore Hosea attacks the cows of Beth-aven and the inhabitants of Samaria (Hos. 10:5), and Amos rebukes those who sacrifice with leavened bread, and likewise detests those who turn judgment and justice into wormwood, and who accept bribes and crush the poor in the gate (Amos 5:12). Moreover, the fact that the Nabathaeans report that certain Jews have been seized in Barasa and Bosor is well expressed by the interpretation of their names; for Barasa and Bosor are interpreted as "tribulations and distress," because all, according to the word of Paul, who wish to live spiritually in Christ will suffer persecution, nor will that person escape the injury of heretics who strives to preserve the doctrine of the true faith. These heretics John the Apostle, in his Apocalypse, describes as causing torment like the torment of scorpions when they strike a man, (Rev. 9:5) because just as scorpions carry their poison in their tail, so heretics conceal their hatred in the completion of their deceit, in order to harm the unsuspecting not with an open face, but with hidden snares.

5:28 And Judas turned back, and his army, etc.

In the preceding passages it is related that the cities of Gilead, in which the Jews had been seized, were fortified and great, which Judas committed to capture and destroy in a single day: for by unity the holy preachers plan to destroy all the strongholds of false doctrines that heretics establish in order to deceive innocent souls and to hold them captive in their errors. Now, however, it says that Judas, in the desert of Bosor, seized the city of Bosor, and killed every male with the edge of the sword, and took their spoils, and burned it with fire; for in this the holy teachers are greatly zealous, that, once they have taken the stronghold of the heretics, they may destroy with the sword of the Holy Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:17), all the power of wicked sects that they establish through worldly philosophy and empty deceit; so that what those men, by their flashiness, had pretended to be of highest importance, these may show to be nothings and frivolous. They take their spoils when they remove from them, as from unjust possessors, the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures which they have misused, and they burn with perpetual anathema their very confession. But what follows, that they rose up in the night, shows that they were left in the darkness of their own error.

5:30 And it came to pass at daybreak, when they lifted up their eyes, etc.

What is expressed by the rankings and schemes of the nations, if not the exultation and defiant arrogance of the proud, through which they desire to attack and overthrow the Church of Christ? But our Judas, who arranges the whole apparatus of war in the light, fights against them with three ranks, that is, either with the faith of the Holy Trinity, or with a twofold teaching, namely historical, allegorical, and tropological; and he cries out with trumpets to heaven, because by strong preaching he raises his

voice in exultation, and with the deep cry of the heart he calls upon God as helper in prayer.

5:34 And the camp of Timotheus learned that Maccabaeus was there, and they fled from his presence.

The camp of Timotheus, having recognized Maccabaeus, fled from his presence, because heretics, once they have recognized the power and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, flee in terror; and they are struck with a great blow, because in them, according to justice, through holy teachers, the vengeance of anathema is carried out; and about eight thousand men fall from among them, together with all the heap of those whom they were striving to gather against the true understanding of spiritual circumcision, or against the faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His members, and the Truth itself, victorious, destroyed them. Therefore it is that the Savior in the Gospel, in loosening the figurative sabbath, on the first day of the week, which is also the eighth day after the seventh, has revealed to us the mystery of His resurrection. Therefore also the Apostle Paul teaches (Col. 2:11) that circumcision not made by hand, in the stripping off of the body of flesh, must be accomplished by the Spirit of the living God in the hearts of believers; where also the old law taught that the foreskin of the heart had to be circumcised.

5:37 After these words, however, Timothy gathered another army and set up camp against Raphon, etc.

After Timothy had been defeated once and again, he did not cease to increase his wickedness, but multiplied his hatred. Once more he rebuilds an army against Judas and his companions; for it is not enough for heretics to engage in disputes once and again with a small number, but they constantly stir up new wars against the

Church and pour out the various poisons of their deceit. ***They set up camp against Raphon across the stream***, because with the utmost effort of their pride they rouse fury and stir up the storm of wars; and they also lead the Arabs, which means "those of the plain," to their aid, because they take to the support of their error those who are devoted to pleasure and follow the luxury of this world. Therefore all these have constructed no small wickedness of their error against the Church. But Judas sends men to scout their army, just as holy teachers urge their hearers to guard against the uproar of the wicked, lest the course of their deceit bring about the destruction of simple souls. As for the fact that Timothy, as if making a calculation, says to the leaders of his army:

> ***5:40-41 When Judas and his army approach the stream of water, if he crosses over to us first, we shall not be able to withstand him, for he will be strong enough to prevail against us; but if he is afraid to cross and sets up camp outside the river, we shall cross over to them and we shall be able to prevail against him.***

This shows that all heretics fear the confidence and commitment of the people who believe rightly, and acknowledge themselves to be weaker the more they see them stronger in the unity of faith; but if they observe the rest of the Catholics becoming slower in the contemplation of God's law and in the practice of good works, they eagerly promise themselves triumph and captivity over them.

> ***5:42 But when Judas drew near to the brook of water, etc.***

Crossing the brook of water, Judas stationed the scribes of the people so that they might urge the crowd behind him to go into battle, just as our Redeemer, approaching the passion of the cross, appointed the apostles, who were to teach those believing in him

to despise the torment of bodily death and to trust in the power of heavenly truth. Therefore it is said: Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna (Matt. 10:28); and again: By your patience you will possess your souls; and he who perseveres to the end, this one will be saved (Luke 21:19); and elsewhere: Blessed, he says, are those who suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:10). From this it is fittingly added:

5:43a He crossed over to them first, and all the people after him,

because it was necessary that the mediator between God and humans should first fulfill the mystery of his own passion, and therefore, strengthened by his example, the faithful from all nations might learn, in suffering for him, to despise death.

5:43b And all nations are crushed before their face,

When the errors of different people are shattered by the power of God's strength.

5:43c They cast away their weapons and fled to the sanctuary that is in Carnaim.

When the obstacles of disputes have been abandoned, the persecutors of truth, not daring to resist, take refuge in the temples of their own gods; from the place where they seek protection, from there they meet their downfall. Now Carnaim is interpreted as “horns”; and horns can suitably be taken to signify kingship and

defense. But their belief did not help them; rather, it deceived them.

5:44 For Judas seized the city itself and burned the sanctuary with fire, together with all who were in it,

showing how our Savior not only destroys every scheme of the error of heretics and persecutors, but indeed burns with the fire of just vengeance all those who put their trust in it. Therefore the Lord commanded in Deuteronomy, saying: If you hear in one of your cities which the Lord your God gives you to dwell in, that some are saying: The sons of Belial have gone out from your midst and have turned away the inhabitants of their city and have said: Let us go and serve strange gods whom you do not know, then you shall inquire carefully and diligently, and if, with the truth of the matter fully examined, you find that what is said is certain, and that this abomination has been committed in deed, you shall immediately strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword and destroy it, and all that is in it, even to the cattle. Whatever furnishings there may be, you shall gather in the midst of its streets, and together with the city itself you shall burn them, so that you utterly consume all for the Lord your God, and it shall be an everlasting heap of ruins (Deut. 13:12-26).

5:45 And Judas gathered together all the Israelites who were in the region of Gilead, etc.

Judas gathers the Israelites from the region of Gilead, just as our Redeemer, through his teachers by the word of the Gospel, calls back to the Catholic faith those who have been taken captive by heretics; for this is what it means to come into the land of Judah: to praise the Lord with right faith and good works.

5:46 And they came as far as Ephron, and this great city, etc.

All the battles of the nations signify the various wars of vices and errors. We have said that those nations which were in the land of Gilead and tried to capture the Israelites represented heretics and Jews; but now, with those who were in Carnaim subdued, again those who were in Ephron strive to resist Judas and his allies: for although various heretics have been crushed, those who follow the letter of the Old Testament still refuse to open the way to spiritual understanding. For what is indicated by Ephron, which is interpreted as "dust of sorrow" or "dust and useless," if not the unnecessary observance of the law in the time of grace, in which the Jews who acknowledge it enclose themselves and block the gates with stones? Dedicated to the shadow, they set the historical tradition, which is written in stone in the law, against the preachers of the Gospel; they will in no way consent to be torn away from it, nor do they allow us to follow a more correct understanding. Therefore: Woe to you, lawyers, who have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering (Luke 11:52). But Judas sends to them with peaceful words, saying:

5:48 We will pass through your land to go into our own land, and no one will harm us.

For holy preachers, according to the command of our Lord, first offer peace to the opposing side, so that what is written may be fulfilled: If there is a son of peace there, your peace will rest upon him; but if not, he says, it will return to you (Luke 10:6). We will pass, they say, through your land to go into our land; as if they were saying: Let us read the history of your books, so that there,

by an allegorical sense, we may find in heaven the homeland promised to us; and no one will harm you, because our passing will be harmless for you; we will pass only with our feet, when by the step of good works we desire to reach the heavenly kingdom. They were unwilling to open, since in the law handed down to them they did not want to share with the preachers of the Gospel.

5:49 And Judas commanded them to preach in the camp, etc.

What does it mean that Judas commanded them to preach in the camp so that each one should move toward the city from the place where he was, if not that holy teachers grant to their hearers freedom of understanding in the Holy Scriptures, so that each person may seek to have opened to himself, in the divine reading, whether through allegory, or through tropology, or through anagogy, what he desires according to the wish of his heart, and, with heavenly grace granting it, may receive the ability to enter in? And note that men of bravery are said there to move in and to attack the city all day and all night: because unless someone is a man of bravery, so that he desires in deed to fulfill what he has learned from the teaching of his masters, and constantly meditates on the law of God day and night, that is, at all times, he will not be the conqueror of that aforementioned city. Therefore the Psalmist calls blessed the man who meditates on the law of the Lord day and night, and has not gone with the counsel of the wicked, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of plague (Ps. 1:1-2). But when it says that they destroyed every male by the edge of the sword and uprooted the city, and therefore took its spoils as he passed through the whole city over the slain, and then crossed the Jordan, it shows us that if we wish to be possessors of the law of the Lord and to receive its spoils, that is, the various understandings, according to right faith, we

should first strive to crush the surface of the letter and to condemn all the errors of heretics; and therefore we should cross into the great plain, that is, cleansed by baptism from burden, let us pass into the freedom of glory, where the sun of righteousness shines upon us, in whose wings true healing is found, who illumines the darkness, the hidden things of darkness, and reveals the secret mysteries to those who seek him not with the fabrication of hypocrisy, but with the truth of faith. Therefore Wisdom warns, saying: "Think about the Lord with goodness, and seek him with simplicity of heart, for he is found by those who do not test him, and he appears to those who have faith in him. For crooked thoughts separate from God, and when power is tested it exposes the foolish. Because wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul, nor will she dwell in a body enslaved to sins. For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without understanding" (Wis. 1:1-5).

5:53 And Judas was gathering the slackers and was exhorting the people along the whole way, etc.

That Judas, returning with his army into the land of Judah, gathering the slackers, was exhorting the people along the whole way until they came into the land of Judah, teaches by his example the doctors of the holy Church what kind of care and how much diligence they ought to have toward their subjects, so that in the journey of the present life they may not neglect to bestow upon them the word of encouragement; but, by teaching, admonishing, reproving, and consoling, they may always strive to benefit them, and, so far as lies in them, may allow no one to fall back from their company and perish; rather, let them hurry all the more, so that, the number of those entrusted to their care being preserved, they may joyfully return into the land of Judah, according to the statement of Paul (Heb. 12 :22-23), to Mount Sion and the city of

the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the assembly of many thousands of angels, and the Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to the Judge of all, the Lord, and then render thanks to Him with worthy praises, by whose gift they have been able to come to the seat of rest and peace.

5:55 And in the days when Judas and Jonathan were in the land of Gilead, etc.

What is signified by these two leaders, namely Joseph and Azariah, who, stirred by zeal for the virtues of Judas, wished through boastfulness to gain a name for themselves in battles, if not the figure of hypocrites, who seek to imitate the virtues of the saints not with a straightforward intention, but with the pride of arrogance? But just as things did not turn out well for them, because what they did was not done with a good character, so also for these men from their attempt there follows not true glory, but everlasting disgrace; for they do not deserve to rejoice in the victory of their own people, but will rather mourn over their own and their followers' eternal damnation. Therefore it is rightly added.

5:60 And there was a great flight among the people, etc.

Therefore, with good reason the one who does not listen to the health-giving counsel of spiritual Judah suffers the fall of great plagues; and because they were not among the number of the elect, who, stirred by the Spirit of God, perform works of virtue, they will, on account of their shameless boldness, be disgracefully confused at the last together with sinners.

5:63 And the men of Judah were greatly magnified in the sight of Israel, etc.

It is well said that the men of Judah were greatly magnified in the sight of all nations, because those who hold the true confession of right faith in such a way that they fulfill in deed what they proclaim with their mouth are deservedly praised by the voice of all nations; and they come to them with favorable cheers, that is, by keeping his commandments they declare them blessed, and they render the praises of Judah to the heavenly King, according to that saying of the Psalmist, who, considering the goods of the Church, says: "They called the people blessed who have these things; blessed is the people whose God is the Lord" (Ps. 144:15). Therefore also our Savior in the Gospel commanded his disciples, saying: "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

5:65 And Judas went out, and his brothers, and they attacked the sons of Esau in the land which is to the south, etc.

What is understood by Esau, who through desire for food sold his birthright to his younger brother Jacob, if not the former people, who, because of earthly desire, showed themselves unworthy of the honor of the firstborn, and on this account the whole dignity was transferred to the people of the Gentiles? And fittingly the sons of Esau are said to dwell in the land which is to the south, because the Jewish people, on account of the law they had received and the writings of the prophets that were handed down among them, seemed to draw near to the light of the eternal sun; but since they were stirred in mind, and placed close to the light, namely that light which enlightens every man coming into this world (Jn. 1:9), they were unwilling to receive it when set before

them, and therefore they are clearly said to have been attacked by Judas and his brothers. For the holy teachers, criticizing them for their error, and, after the just one had been despised and condemned because of their disobedience, turning to the preaching of the Gentiles, struck down the error of the faithless both in the Synagogue itself and in individual persons with the sword of the word of God, and burned with the fire of due condemnation the towers of pride which they, with exalted mind, had raised against the Gospel of Christ.

5:66 And he moved his camp to go into the land of foreigners, etc.

Note, reader, that he now briefly recapitulates, by touching on them again, all those types of adversaries which he had mentioned before, that is, of the Jews, the Gentiles, and the heretics. For when a little earlier he related that the sons of Esau had been conquered, he immediately added that the camps of the foreigners, together with their altars and the spoils of their own gods, had been burned; then that Samaria had been navigated. Now he mentions Samaria, because not only Jewish superstition, but also the error of the Gentiles and the corruption of the heretics, is overcome, confused, destroyed, and reduced to nothing through the preaching of the apostles and the Gospel of Christ. Yet above all, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David (Rev. 5:5), has conquered, and who can resist him? Judgment has been hurled from heaven, the earth trembled and was still when God rose up in judgment to save all the meek of the earth (Ps. 76:8-9). But what is said among other things, that priests fell in battle when they go out to the fight without counsel, is a most fearful sentence.

Chapter 6

On the death of Antiochus and the succession of his son, who sent an army to wage war against Judas and is defeated: he grants peace deceitfully, which he soon breaks; it is said that he made use of elephants in the wars.

6:1 And King Antiochus went through the upper regions, etc.

After the many works of wickedness that Antiochus committed in the holy place and among the people of God, he was justly destroyed by divine judgment, as he himself confirms in what follows, saying that he had come to know that these evils had found him out on account of those deeds, and that for that reason he would perish in sorrow in a foreign land. Although Polybius of Megalopolis, the historian, as Josephus bears witness, writes only that he perished because he wished to devastate the temple of Diana in Persia, yet this opinion is in no way accepted by the faithful, who know that all the gods of the nations are demons, and that the idols of the gentiles are silver and gold, the work of human hands (Ps. 135:15). But because he swelled with pride against the almighty Lord, he received fitting punishment; so also will all the wicked, and likewise, in the end, that new son of perdition himself, who exalts himself above everything that is called God or is worshiped (2 Thess. 2:4), of whom Antiochus was a type here, on account of the works of wickedness that he will commit, will perish under the judgment of the heavenly Visitor, whom the Lord Jesus, according to the words of Paul, will slay with the breath of his mouth (2 Thess. 2:8), and will destroy by the brightness of his coming. Therefore Antiochus here holds the role of a type of the persecutors of Christ and the Church.

6:16 And King Antiochus died there in the one hundred and forty-ninth year, etc.

It is not surprising that from a cruel father a savage son was born, who imitated the wicked deeds of his most wicked father. Of him the Lord says in the Gospel to the elders and the proud among the Jews: You are of your father the Devil, and you wish to do the desires of your father; for he was a murderer from the beginning (Jn. 8:44). And rightly the son of a murderer plans to commit murder, not only bodily but also spiritual, that is, the destruction of souls which die in sin and wickedness.

6:18 And those who were in the citadel had confined Israel around their holy ones, etc.

But who are those who in the citadel were shutting in Israel around their own people and were always seeking evil for them to the strengthening of the nations, if not those who, raising themselves up in the citadel of pride, persecute true religion so that they may suffocate the word of God and restore error and idolatry? Against them Judas prepares to do battle, because the whole purpose of the holy teachers especially strives to arrange this: that errors may be driven out and that errors may be overcome by the preeminence of truth. But stirred by this zeal, certain people from the nations, such as the philosophers, and certain also from the ungodly in Israel, who are the heretics, provoke the dominion of this world to hatred of the servants of God, so that, helped by this support, they may be able to exalt their wickedness more easily. Therefore it is read that these, approaching the king, said to him:

6:22-28 How long will you fail to render judgment and avenge the brothers of the city? We resolved to serve your father and to walk in his commandments, and to obey his words; and the sons of our people on this account alienated themselves from us, and whoever of us was

found was killed, and our inheritances were plundered, and they did not stretch out their hand against us only, but against all our borders. And the king was angered when he heard these things and summoned all his friends and the leaders of his army, etc.

The typical Antiochus gathers an army not only from his own people, but also from foreigners, because the savagery of persecutors, not content with internal revolt, also rouses enormous wars from outside against the servants of Christ. They form infantry, arrange cavalry, prepare elephants, so that nothing may be lacking to their cruelty; but whatever wickedness can conceive, all massacre prepares. But figuratively, just as foot soldiers and horsemen can represent officers and executioners, so also elephants, because of the enormity of their bodies and the cruelty of their spirits, can represent the arrogance of princes; and it is fitting that they showed the blood of the grape and of the mulberry to the beasts to inflame their anger, because in the shedding of the blood of the martyrs the savagery of the persecutors was stirred up. And it is well said that

6:35 a thousand men in chain-linked breastplates and bronze helmets on their heads stood by each elephant, and five hundred horsemen were assigned to each beast:

for many are those who, by flattery, favor princes; whose chain-linked breastplates mean that they are entangled with one another in the deceits of wicked counsel; and they have a bronze helmet on their heads when they surround their minds with the hardness of iniquity; and there the horsemen are arranged, because the puffing up of pride will not be lacking where, through lack of mercy, the equality of common nature is not considered, but the vanity of worldly favor is sought. And the wooden towers, which, placed upon the beasts, contained thirty men within them, express

the delicateness of that power by which persecutors always trust that they prevail over the martyrs. And it is rightly said:

6:37-38 Inside was the master of the beast and the rest of the horsemen on either side,

because the cruelty of the minds that devised all this evil was burning within the hearts of the persecutors, which is the activity of pride, but outwardly it was stained in the torture of the innocent. And with these things therefore arranged, Judas set his army and resolved to exhort it, because holy preachers, when they engage in the wars of persecution, do not cease by words to strengthen the spirits of their hearers; and although earthly glory shines in worldly display, and although varied kinds of torments blaze in tortures, yet the martyrs of Christ remain unshaken, and, clinging to the side of their judge, Judas of course in the spiritual sense, they conquer and cast down the boldness of the wicked.

6:43 And Eleazar the son of Saura saw one of the beasts armored with the king's armor, etc.

Now it should be noted that Josephus asserts Eleazar to be the brother of Judah, about whom it was narrated above that he was one of the five sons of Mattathias called by this name. But it can be asked how he is said to be the son of Saura, if he was the son of Mattathias, unless perhaps Mattathias himself was called Saura by another name. And what is signified by Eleazar, who, killing the elephant, fell in death, if not the person of the arrogant, who, while they wish to undertake something bravely, yet not with a simple heart but with a proud one, are overcome and cast down in their attempts. This event can also, not inappropriately, be transferred to the signification of hypocrites. For when hypocrites fight against lust, or against gluttony, or against bodily sins

through abstinence, and, taming the flesh by fasting or by vigils and the other works of abstinence, do not keep careful watch over themselves against spiritual wickedness, so that they do not beware of pride or envy or greed, they are sometimes conquered in conquering, because while they overcome in one way of life, in this victory, being careless, they are crushed by others.

6:48-49 And the king's camp was set against Judea and Mount Zion, and he made peace with those who were in Bethsura, etc.

The mystical Antiochus advances against Judea and Mount Zion, because he turns his entire war apparatus toward the overthrow of the Church of Christ and makes peace with those who were in Bethsura, since he does not offer true peace but false peace to those whom he wishes to deceive and mislead through fabrication. But only those go out to him from the city who had no food while shut in; for only those withdraw, seduced away from the protection of the Church, who do not have the nourishment of knowledge and love with which their soul may be fed. They also keep the sabbath badly, since they love not the pursuit of virtues but the idleness of sloth; and they themselves, seized by the enemy, return into his dominion, because they refuse to anticipate his snares. Now that it is said that the king turned his camp toward the place of sanctification for many days signifies that the persecutors of the faithful do not easily cease from the cruelty of persecution, but every day, up to the end of the age, wage wars, for the testing of some believers, for the deception of others. For while the mystical woman, who is expressed under the figure of Eve, crushes the serpent's head, that poisonous snake will never cease to lie in wait for her heel. But that which is added:

6:54 And in the holy places there remained few men, because famine had overtaken them, and each was scattered to his own place,

signifies that, when the persecution of unbelievers burns hot, many of those who persisted in the Church only in outward appearance, and not in the constancy of faith, are scattered because of fear of punishment, according to that which the Lord foretold in the Gospel would happen in the last times: For there shall be, he says, great tribulation upon the earth and wrath against this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trampled by the Gentiles, until the times of the nations be fulfilled. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened (Luke 21:23-24).

6:55 And Lysias heard that Philip, whom King Antiochus had appointed while he was still alive, etc.

What Josephus reports on this point seems not unworthy to be inserted into this work; nor should it seem burdensome to the reader if the accounts of different histories are compared with one another, because they seem mutually to help in explaining the correctness of the matter and in historically weaving back the truth. Josephus, moreover, relates this in the following manner (Antiquities, 12.14): “When Lysias the general and King Antiochus were informed that Philip, coming from Persia, had dared to assume the government entrusted to him, and wished to take upon himself the commonwealth of Antiochus, they decided to leave the siege aside and go against Philip. This plan they were by no means willing to make clear to the other commanders, but the king ordered Lysias to tell the generals that a prolonged blockade could in no way benefit them, since it was evident that

the enemy's position was fortified and that they themselves were suffering from a shortage of provisions, and that it would be practical to make peace with the Jews and allow them to use their own ceremonies, from which, being before forbidden by us, they appear to have become alienated. Saying this, he decided that Philip's tyranny should be passed over in silence, lest his army should be struck with wavering hearts. As Lysias said these things, the decision pleased the army and the generals. Then the king, sending to Judas, promised peace to the besieged and assured them that they might live according to their ancestral laws. They, on receiving his words, and with oaths and pledges confirmed, left the temple. When Antiochus entered and saw the fortified place, shamelessly violating the oaths, he ordered the whole army standing around to demolish the walls down to the foundations. After he had done this, Antiochus returned to Antioch, taking with him Onias, the chief of the priests, who was also called Menelaus. For Lysias persuaded the king to kill Menelaus if he wished to have the Jews at peace, saying that he had been the beginning of the evils, who had induced his father to compel the Jews to abandon their ancestral religion. Therefore the king, sending Menelaus to Berea, a city of Syria, put him to death, in the tenth year of his high priesthood; and in order that he himself might obtain the high priesthood, he had driven the Jews to transgress the laws. After the death of Menelaus, the ruler appointed was Alcimus, who was also called Joachim. But King Antiochus, finding Philip in command of affairs, fought against him, and having brought him under his own power, killed him. Now the son of the high priest Onias, of whom we have spoken before, still a little boy, left behind on his father's death, seeing that the king had killed his uncle Menelaus and had given the high priesthood to Alcimus, who did not belong to the priestly line, but that Lysias had prevailed upon him to transfer the honor from that family to another house, fled to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, and received honor from him and from Cleopatra his wife, and requested a place in

the region of Heliopolis, where he might build a temple similar to that in Jerusalem." So far Josephus.

But the fact that Antiochus made a treaty with the Israelites, and he and his princes swore an oath, yet did not keep the oath, but broke his sworn promise and violated the covenant, signifies that with heretics and unbelievers there will in no way be a firm covenant agreement, because in them there is by no means a settled observance of law. Therefore in no way is a treaty to be made with vices and with the author of vices, even if they promise peace and fake prosperity; rather, at all times one must persistently fight against them with the shield of faith and the weapons of righteousness. Only then should one cease from battle, when the enemy Antiochus is not merely silent in the world, but is plunged down and thrust away into hell.

Chapter 7

Demetrius, after killing Antiochus and Lysias, obtained the kingdom. About Alcimus and Bacchides and their wickedness; about the blood shed around Jerusalem. Demetrius sent Nicanor against Israel; Judas prayed and prevailed.

7:1 In the one hundred and fifty-first year Demetrius, son of Seleucus, departed from the city of Rome, etc.

Concerning this Demetrius, Pompeius Trogus recounts in his History as follows, saying: When Antiochus withdrew [died], having left a very young son, to whom guardians had been appointed by the people, his uncle Demetrius, who was a hostage at Rome, having learned of the death of his brother Antiochus, went to the Senate, saying that he had come as a hostage while his

brother was alive, and now that he was dead, he did not know whose hostage he was; therefore it was just that he be released to pursue the kingdom, because by the law of nations it had passed to his elder brother, and should now, for the same reason, belong to him, who was older in years than the region. When he perceived that he was not being released by the Senate, which, by a silent judgment, considered the kingdom safer with the region than with him, he left the City under the ploy of going hunting, and at Ostia quietly boarded a ship with his companions in flight. Carried to Syria with favorable winds, he is welcomed with universal approval, and the kingdom is handed over to him by the guardians, after the ward has been killed. (Justin, The Epitome, 34.3)

7:5 And wicked and sinful men from Israel came to him, and Alcimus their leader, etc.

By King Demetrius are signified nothing other than the princes of the nations who stir up persecution against the Church of Christ. This is well explained by the interpretation of his name; for it is interpreted “binding violently” or “excessively persecuting.” To this ruler, therefore, there come wicked and sinful men from Israel, and Alcimus their leader, when those who, after receiving faith in Christ, have returned to apostasy, blaspheme the Christian religion and mock the worship of the Church; whose leaders are the heretics, who, through ambition for exaltation, wish to be regarded as great by all. But when deceitfulness of this kind has been undertaken, Demetrius, in a figurative sense, sends Bacchides, who ruled beyond the river in the kingdom, in order to appoint the wicked Alcimus as priest, and to exact vengeance on the sons of Israel: that is, when pagans of whatever sort, powerful in this world, who have not yet merited to be washed in the baptism of Christ and to be numbered among the faithful, lend the support of their pride to the heretics, and inflict the torment of

punishments upon the true confessors of Christ; yet although such persons speak peaceful words deceitfully to Judas and his brothers, they do not accept their words, because in no way do they trust in their deceit.

7:23 And Judas saw all the evils that Alcimus had done, and those who were with him, etc.

What does it mean that Judas demands vengeance on the transgressors, if not that our Redeemer justifies his elect and does not allow any of his own to perish in vain? But he exercises vengeance on those who deserve it in two ways: for some, by calling them from the fountain of his great mercy to repentance for their error, he causes them to rise up against themselves, so that with weeping they punish what they formerly did by their misdeeds; but others, by a just judgment, after they have committed crimes, he allows to persist uncorrected in their hardness, so that afterwards he may inflict on them fitting punishments for what they have deserved by their unjust works.

7:26 And the king sent Nicanor, one of his more noble princes, who was exercising hostilities against Israel, etc.

By this Nicanor, whom we read in another place to have been set over the elephants, we can understand the false apostles or false prophets, who, proceeding from the Jews in the service of their pride, came to the Church of the Gentiles. These, attempting by disguise to introduce error into the Church of Christ, pretended to be peaceable, but, as will appear in the end, were most savage enemies. Concerning them the apostle John, writing in his Apocalypse (Rev. 2:9), says: Those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan; whom the teacher of the Gentiles, in his Epistle (2 Cor. 11), calls false apostles, deceitful

workers, who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ; and no wonder, since Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light; therefore it is no great thing if his ministers are disguised as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works. These therefore, like Nicanor, stretching forth their hand against the temple of the Lord, blaspheme; because they reduce from the power of Christ, who is in the Church, as though it were less strong, saying to the brethren: Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved, for therefore it is read in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 15:1) that they taught them; but when victory has been won through our Judas and his companions, the blasphemous head of this error, together with Nicanor and the right hand of evil action, is cut off, lest any longer an injury of such blasphemy be inflicted upon the divine majesty. For the apostle Paul says to us (Eph. 2:8-10): By His grace you are saved through faith, and this not from yourselves, for it is the gift of God; not from works, so that no one may glory. For we are His workmanship in Christ Jesus, created for good works, which God prepared that we should walk in them.

Chapter 8

About the fame and power of the Romans. Judas sends envoys to Rome for the sake of peace: the decree of the Romans to the Jews.

8:1 And Judas heard the name of the Romans, that they are strong in power, etc.

Judas sends messengers to the Romans to establish friendship and alliance with them; this signifies that our Redeemer, through His preachers, offers the Gospel of peace to the nations and calls them to His faith. They in turn wrote back on bronze tablets what had been requested, and sent them to Jerusalem, so that there would

be there among them a memorial of peace and alliance: for the nations converted to belief in Christ, firm in their faith, establish a covenant which they intend to last for a long time, and they hand down in the Catholic Church a monument of true confession, so that there may be there an everlasting memorial of their fellowship. Therefore it is said through the prophet: “Behold, the Lord has made it heard, and has sent messengers to the nations” (Jer. 49:14). Likewise: “And the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them” (Isa. 63:9). And again: “It is too small a thing,” he says, “that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the remnant of Israel” (Isa. 49:6); “I have given you as a light to the nations, that you may be my salvation to the end of the earth” (Isa. 42). And again: “I have given you as a covenant to the people, to restore the land and to possess the desolate heritages” (Isa. 49:8). And what does it mean that Judas sent two messengers to the Romans for the sake of making peace, if not that our Redeemer, to call the nations to faith and to the fellowship of peace, has sent the two Testaments into the world, or, in another sense, sends two messengers because of the sacrament of love, since there are two precepts of love, and love cannot exist with fewer than two persons. For no one is properly said to have love toward himself; rather, by love he extends himself toward another, so that love may exist. The Lord sends the disciples two by two to preach in the Gospel, so that he may silently suggest this to us: whoever does not have love toward another should by no means undertake the office of preaching. It is well said, moreover, that he sent them before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to come (Luke 10:1); for the Lord follows his preachers, because preaching goes before, and then the Lord comes to the dwelling of our mind; the words of encouragement run ahead, and through them truth is received in the mind.

Chapter 9

Demetrius sends an army against the Jews. On the death of Judas Maccabeus. On the wicked men and the wickedness of Bacchides. On weddings turned into mourning. Jonathan obtains the leadership; Alcimus, wishing to destroy the temple, was struck dumb, etc.

9:1 Meanwhile, when Demetrius heard that Nicanor and his army had fallen in battle, etc.,

Demetrius again renews the war through Bacchides and Alcimus against Judas, because through pagans and heretics who have relapsed from the faith of Christ, the prince of this world daily renews, with new tricks, his old plots to harm the Church; with whom he also sent the right wing, when for the perpetration of such a crime he entrusted a strong band of auxiliaries; against whom Judas goes with three thousand, because against all the enemies of the faith the assembly of teachers, together with the faithful, resolves to fight, so that through faith in the Holy Trinity he may lay low the host of enemies, who, in arrogant pride, dares to raise itself up against its own author. But let us see what is written next in this passage:

9:6 And they saw the multitude of the army, because they were many, and they were greatly afraid, etc.

For although many seem to remain in the confession of the Catholic faith, yet when persecution blazes up, it will appear who have been steadfast in the faith, and who only seemed outwardly to be in it. Therefore it is written in the Gospel parable (Matt. 13:6) that when the sun rose, the crops that were on rocky ground and did not have much soil were scorched; because those who do not hold firm roots of belief in their heart, believing for a time, fall away in a time of temptation. Therefore, of the three thousand, none remained with Judah except only eight hundred men;

because when the depraved fall away from the fellowship of the Church, only the elect, who are predestined to receive eternal blessedness, will remain in the stability of sound faith, etc.

9:11a And the army moved from the camp and they stood to meet them, and the cavalry was divided into two parts.

What does it mean that, when the army advanced from the camp, the cavalry is said to have been divided into two parts, if not that among the proud and the arrogant unity and firm concord can never be preserved? As Scripture bears witness, which says: Among the proud there are always quarrels (Prov. 13:10).

9:11b And, he says, the slingers and archers were going before the army.

What is meant by slingers and archers, if not those who, in order to entice human minds to idolatry or apostasy, either by flattering with empty promises of prosperity, like the whirling of a sling, strive to pervert the faithful, or by threatening them with torments, seek to deceive them by terrifying them, as though with the blows of arrows? And these are rightly described as going before the army, because it has always been the custom of persecutors to precede the infliction of tortures with such methods.

9:13a And the earth was moved at the sound of the armies, etc.

And, he says, the earth was moved at the sound of the armies; that is, the hearts of the fleshly were shaken with fear of persecutions.

9:13b And the battle was joined from morning until evening.

For from the rising of the dawning faith until the end of the world, the camp of the Devil does not cease to wage war against the Church of God, and by the adversity of tribulations it never stops trying to disturb the good. For, according to the judgment of Paul: All who wish to live piously in Christ suffer persecution (1 Tim. 3:12).

9:14 Judas saw that the stronger part of Bacchides' army was on the right flank, and,

having gathered to himself all those who were steadfast in heart, he crushed it, while, with fitting supports offered by the faithful, the holy teachers strive to repel the assault of the pagans by the word of faith and to lead them to the peacefulness of faith. For that part of theirs seemed stronger, because on the side of pagan error they burned against the Church through the savagery of tortures, more than those who, with invented friendships, deceitfully arranged snares for their brethren. But Judas pursued the army of Bacchides as far as Azotus, just as the preachers of the Gospel strive to turn the fury of the pagans into the flame of holy love. For Azotus is interpreted as "the fire of a paternal uncle." That love, which burned in the hearts of the patriarchs, can be so called, which the zeal of the teachers longs to shape in the minds of the children, so that what is written of Elijah may come to pass: "That he may turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the unbelieving to the wisdom of the Just, to prepare for the Lord a perfect people" (Luke 1:17).

9:16 And those who were in the left horn saw that the right horn was crushed, etc.

When the right horn, which was stronger, fell, the left horn pursues Judah from behind; because, with the grave persecution of the pagans somewhat put to sleep, the heretics, with a misguided (left-sided) intention, by deceitfully plotting against the holy Church and secretly wounding it as if from behind, by no means cease to persecute it. Therefore it follows:

9:17 And the battle grew intense and many fell wounded from among them, etc.

The battle grows intense when the pagans, by open persecution, and the heretics, by deceitful seduction, assail the Church of Christ. And many fall wounded from both these and those, when the wicked, envying the good, fall stricken by the weapons of their own hatred in great numbers: they are forced by the torments inflicted by the wicked to blaspheme, which very often happens where the common people are left without the help of their teachers. Therefore it is added:

9:18 And Judas fell, and the others fled.

For when the shepherds are slaughtered, the flocks are driven to flee in different directions, as it is written in the prophet Zechariah in the foretelling of the passion of Christ: “Strike,” he says, “the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered” (Zech. 13:7). The evangelist brought this forward as testimony in the Lord’s passion, where, when He Himself was arrested by the crowds, all the disciples, leaving Him, fled; (Matt. 26:56 and Mark 14:50) because what came first in the Head must necessarily be followed in the Body.

9:19 And Jonathan and Simon took Judas their brother and buried him in the tomb of their fathers in the city of Modin, etc.

The fall of death's historical ruin in good teachers cannot pass without their disciples' sorrow: therefore it is said that ***all the people of Israel had wept for Judas with great weeping (9:20).*** Something similar to this is also found written in the passion of Stephen: Devout men took care of Stephen and made great weeping over him (Acts 8:2). But although the departure of their own touches the minds of the faithful with compassion, nonetheless they are not without the comfort they possess concerning the future rest of souls through sure hope. For the saints grieve in some manner in the pain of their body, but they rejoice at least in spirit over the reward assigned to them in the heavenly kingdom. Where the Savior, preaching in the Gospel to his disciples about the greatness of his passion and the certain reward of his triumph, says: Blessed are you when men shall insult you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake. Rejoice in that day and exult, for your reward is great in heaven (Matt. 5:11-12).

9:22 And so forth are the other words of the wars of Judas and of the virtues which he performed, etc.

There are many wars and virtues which the saints accomplish, or rather the Lord in them, the knowledge of all of which no one can grasp, but they endure only in the recognition of their author. Therefore, concerning them the Lord says in the Gospel: My sheep hear my voice, and I, the Lord, know them (Jn. 10:27); and again: Rejoice and be glad, he says, because your names are written in heaven; for, he says, even the hairs of your head are all numbered, and not a hair of your head shall perish (Luke 10:30). Of this, it is also written elsewhere: The Lord knows those who are his (Matt.

10:33); and again: He alone knows the hearts of all the sons of Adam (Luke 21:34). Therefore in the psalm the Prophet says: Who counts the multitude of the stars and calls all of them by name (Ps. 147:4); and again: Wonderful, he says, is the Lord in his saints; he himself will give strength and power to his people (Ps. 68:35). Therefore it is necessary that each one may say, and all may say: Blessed be the Lord who alone has done great marvels, and blessed be the name of his majesty forever, and unto the age of ages (Ps. 72:18).

9:23 And it came to pass, after the death of Judas, that wicked men arose in all the borders of Israel, etc.

In the earlier passages, where the death of Mattathias is mentioned, it is found written that he died in the one hundred and forty-sixth year. In his place his son Judas arose and fought the battle of Israel. Likewise, in what follows it is written that Jonathan, after Judas his brother, took up the leadership. After him Alcimus, in the one hundred and fifty-third year, ordered the walls of the holy house and the works of the prophets to be destroyed, and he died at that time. Josephus, however, relates that after Alcimus, who is also Joachim, having held the leadership of the priesthood for four years, entered upon the priesthood, the people of Judah opposed him; and he says that after he had exercised the leadership of the priesthood for three years, he died. In all this it is understood that Judas, after the death of Mattathias his father, bore the leadership of the people for seven years; during which, for four years he expelled by battle the generals of Antiochus from Judea, and, cleansing the temple from the images of idols, he then restored the ancestral laws to his fellow citizens, in the one hundred and fourth [first] Olympiad, and therefore he received the leadership of the priesthood and completed three years in it. Therefore also in the Chronicles it is found that Jonathan, in the

sixth year of Demetrius Soter, received the leadership of the Jews, which he held for nineteen years, that is, ten years after the death of his father Mattathias, in the one hundred and fifty-fifth Olympiad. Therefore that harassment by wicked men, which after the death of Judas troubled the sons of Israel, mystically signifies that, when good teachers are taken away, the faithful hearers experience no small loss, since, once the opportunity is seized, not only pagans but also heretics weary the Church of God with grievous persecutions. From this Paul, when he was about to go up to Jerusalem, having called together the elders of the Ephesians, among other things said: Now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Wherefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all. For I have not shrunk from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Take notice to yourselves and to the whole flock, in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as bishops to rule the Church of God, which he acquired with his own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among yourselves will arise men speaking wicked things, in order to draw away disciples after them. Therefore be watchful, remembering that for three years I did not cease, night and day, with tears, to caution every one of you. And now I hand over you to God and to the word of his grace, who is able to build up and to give an inheritance among those who are sanctified (Acts 20:25-32).

9:24 In those days there arose a very great famine, etc.

When the famine arose, the whole region surrendered itself to Bacchides: because, with preachers failing on account of a famine of the word of God, from which souls ought to be nourished, for, according to the verdict of Truth: “Man does not live by bread

alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4), some, forced by torments, and others enticed by empty persuasions, deliver themselves from the number of ministers over to the nations. These search out the friends of the true Judah, whom, as Scripture bears witness, all his brothers praise; and when they have found them, they mock them and inflict punishment on them. Everyone who reads ecclesiastical history knows that this interpretation came to pass in the earliest times among the worshipers of Christ in the Church. But also the spiritual forces of wickedness, which serve the will of the ancient enemy, when they see the souls of men lacking the bread of the word of God, strive to lead them into error and draw them into vices, so that from the friends of Judah they may make prey for Satan and turn the vessels of God into fuel for eternal fire.

9:27 And there was great tribulation in Israel, such as had not been, etc.

For after a prophet was no longer seen in Israel, great tribulation arose; because, when teaching ceases among the people, the scourge of sins is stirred up, and from there God's vengeance goes forth against them. Therefore it is necessary that the teachers of the Church be zealous in teaching those under them, and that the hearers be attentive in listening to the word of God. Therefore also it is said through Solomon: Good instruction will give grace (Prov. 13:25). The lips of the wise keep them. Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty; where there are many crops, there is evident strength (Prov. 14:4). For the good there will be abundance in every good work. Mercy and truth prepare good things (Prov. 14:22).

9:28 And all the friends of Judas were gathered together and said to Jonathan, etc.

What does it mean that, after the death of Judas, Jonathan is read to have been chosen by the people to the priesthood, to fill the place of his brother, if not that, when the first teachers of the Church depart through martyrdom, their successors, by the governing grace of the Holy Spirit, are appointed in their place? The effectiveness of this governance is shown by the meaning of the name Jonathan: for it is interpreted "their dove," as has been shown above, bringing close the preachers of the word so that they may worthily bear the office of their leadership among the people of God and provide fitting defense to their subjects against their enemies. But just as against the earlier, so also against the later teachers of the people of God, cruel darts are hurled by unbelievers and heretics, and the savage hostility of enemies opposes them. Therefore it follows:

9:31 And Jonathan took upon himself the leadership at that time, etc.

Jonathan fled, as the battle was drawing near, into the desert of Tekoa, because, when the persecution of the enemies blazes up, holy teachers, together with their followers, by their prayers penetrate the secret court of heaven, so that by calling upon Almighty God there they may find help, whom with the full intention of their heart they ask to come to their aid. For Tekoa is interpreted as "trumpet" or "clang." But what is added:

9:33 And they sat down by the water of the lake Asphar,

signifies that they devote themselves to the tears of regret, so that they may more easily strive to obtain the support of Almighty

God, when they seek refuge not elsewhere, but solely in His mercy. Therefore Asphar is interpreted as “he sat” or “ground,” because when the heart is healed of vices and is pierced with regret, the moisture of tears is poured forth more abundantly from the eyes, to provoke the mercy of God.

9:34 And Bacchides became aware of it, and on the sabbath day he himself came, and all his army, across the Jordan, etc.

What does it mean that Bacchides came with his army against the Jews on the sabbath day across the Jordan, if not that the persecutors of Christians, envying the peace and serenity of the Church, strive, by breaking in with tumult, to disturb the sacrament of baptism and to overturn the condition of the faith? For this purpose they call the Nabuthaeans, their friends, to their aid, because they associate heretics and ill-inclined men with themselves for the crushing of the faithful. For the Nabuthaeans, as some affirm, are interpreted as “profaners,” according to the wickedness of their heart; and heretics can rightly be called profaners in this passage, for by their teaching they do not praise the truth of sound faith, but, according to the wickedness of their heart, they bring forth the falsity of error. Therefore also in the Law the prophets who dreamed vain things and prophesied lies were, according to the judgment of the Lord, condemned to death; and it is most certain that this happens to heretics, who through useless schisms and sects separate themselves from God and, through error and blasphemy, join themselves to the Devil.

9:34 And the sons of Jambri went out from Madaba and seized John and everything he had, etc.

By the sons of Jambri, those who are devoted to the pleasures of this world are represented, who are said to go out from Madaba, that is, from the birth of the Lord, when they strive, without any change, to indulge the carnal desire which they have contracted originally on the side of the flesh. These therefore seize John and everything he had and went away possessing them, when they draw someone from the sons of the Church, washed in the water of baptism and reborn by the grace of God, over to themselves through unlawful desires, and by corrupting the good pursuits with which he served God, they pervert them to the allurements of pleasures. But Jonathan and Simon, desiring to avenge these things, overthrew and killed the bridegroom who had taken as wife

9:37 the daughter of one of the great princes of Canaan in great ambition,

together with all his display and his friends: when holy teachers rescue from their evil intention some of those whom they see with all their effort to be eagerly clinging to the pleasures of the world and inclined to luxury (for whom the prince of this age, to deceive them, also sets before them those who burn with carnal desire, drawing them into his fellowship), and in them they slay, with the sword of the divine word, that which was harmful and opposed to the divine commandments. For such a victory well suits those who have learned from the heavenly Master to love their enemies and to do good to those who hate them; to pray for those who persecute and slander them, to bless those who curse and not to curse in return. They receive their spoils when they convert all their efforts and activities to ecclesiastical use. Therefore it is rightly added:

9:41 And the weddings were turned into mourning, and the sound of their music into weeping.

For the holy preachers teach them to change the empty joy of the world into the mourning of repentance, and vain jests and useless songs into divine psalmody with regret of tears, those whom they seize as a saving prey and utterly slay from a carnal life and from the deeds of the old man. And therefore they return to the bank of the Jordan, when they lead them to the condition of the Christian religion and to the reception of holy baptism, so that there the evangelical rite may be fulfilled, for the sake of which all this labor was undertaken.

9:43 And Bacchides heard of it and came on the sabbath day as far as the bank of the Jordan with great force, etc.

When the persecutors of the faithful, on the spiritual sabbath, on which the worshipers of Christ themselves withdraw from earthly desires to hear the word of God and to sing praise to the Lord, stirred up by envy strive to disturb them, and attempt to profane the sacrament of baptism by secular power, the mystical Jonathan urges his followers to spiritual combat; that is, that by patience of mind and strength of faith they may fight in opposition against their enemies, not that by fighting or striking they might harm them, but that by patience and gentleness, enduring and repaying with benefits, they may conquer them more effectively, according to that saying of the Savior, who said to his disciples: You have heard that it was said to those of old: An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; but I say to you not to resist evil; but if anyone strikes you on your right cheek, offer him the other also; and to him who wishes to struggle with you in court and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well (Matt. 5:38-42). And again: In your patience you shall possess your souls (Luke 21:29). Therefore Paul also says: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for in doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome

evil with good (Rom. 12:20-21). By such offerings God is propitiated, who grants victory to his servants and lays their enemies low beneath their feet. Therefore, it is written later that Jonathan made peace with Bacchides, and that Bacchides, ***having sworn that he would do him no harm all the days of his life, restored to him the captives he had previously taken from the land of Judah. (9:71-72)***

> ***9:54 And in the one hundred and fifty-third year, in the second month, Alcimus ordered the walls of the house to be destroyed.***

We have said above that Alcimus, a defiler of the law and a traitor to his country, signifies the heretics, who do not fear to profane the Testament of God with wicked sects and to disturb the Church of God; he now destroys the walls of the holy inner house and is said to demolish the works of the prophets, which can fittingly be applied to those same heretics, who not only corrupt the oracles of the prophets with empty traditions, but also strive, in whatever way they can, to violate and dispute the bulwark of faith (which is kept in the hearts of believers with a mind intent on the observance of the mystical law of God). But let us see what follows in common:

> ***9:56a In that time Alcimus was struck down and his undertakings were ruined, etc.***

For although heretics may boast in empty pride, although for a time they may seem to prevail over the faithful through the support of the powerful of this world, yet by the judgment of Almighty God they will in the end be overthrown, and the strength of their perverse will shall be dissolved, when they are unable to bring to completion what they wish to accomplish. Nor is it even permitted

that anything be ordered from their own house, that is, from their following manner of life, once the sentence of the heavenly Judge is already awaiting; instead, what is said through the Psalmist will be fulfilled: “May the Lord destroy all deceitful lips and the boastful tongue. Who have said: We will magnify our tongue; our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?” (Ps. 12:3-4).

9:56b And Alcimus died at that time with great torment.

For when heretics persist in their wickedness until the end of this present life, the second death follows, and they shall be sent, according to the sentence of the Apocalypse of John, into the lake of eternal fire, and they shall be tormented with fire and sulphur in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torments shall rise for ever and ever, and they shall have no rest day or night, those who adored the beast and its image, and they gnaw their tongues for pain, and they blaspheme the Lord of heaven because of the pains of their wounds, and they did not do fruitful penance for their deeds, because they were unwilling, while it was permitted, to purge themselves beforehand from their errors. (Rev. 14:9-11)

9:57 And Bacchides saw that Alcimus was dead, and he returned to the king, and the land was silent for two years.

From the persecution of the unbelievers and the harassment of the heretics, the Church had peace for a time, according to that which is read in the Acts of the Apostles: “The Church indeed throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being edified, walking in the fear of the Lord, and was filled with the comfort of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 9:31) But because peace and security in this present life will not be long-lasting and enduring, the following statement makes this clear, where it is written:

9:58 And all the wicked thought, saying, etc.

All the enemies envy the peace and quiet of the Church of God. Therefore, whatever arises with happy success for the good, they seek the help of the wicked in order to harm it. This is signified by the letter of Bacchides, secretly sent to his associates who were in Judea so that they might seize Jonathan and those who were with him in Judea; because the savage persecutors from without, when they cannot overthrow the confessors of Christ by tortures, construct snares from within through false brothers, who appear to remain in the Church, so that those whom the former could not destroy by the sword, the latter may deceive by trickery. Therefore the Apostle Paul also frequently complains in his Epistles (Gal. 2) of the deceit of false brothers, who slipped in and perverted the truth of the Gospel, but they could not prevail, because their plan became known; for a good teacher's diligence acts so that he may know how to provide for the people subject to him and to guard them against the cunning of the perverse.

9:61 And he seized, he says, the men of the region who were leaders of the army, and they were being put to death by Bacchides.

What else are these but those who, content with the surface of the legal letter, wish to observe the Pentateuch of the Law not spiritually but carnally, in circumcision and in words; whom the teacher of the Gentiles reproves when writing to the Galatians, where he says: O foolish Galatians! who has bewitched you? How is it that you are turning again to the weak and poor elements, to which you wish to be enslaved once more? You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I fear lest perhaps I have labored among you in vain. You were running well; who has hindered you

from obeying the truth? This persuasion is not from him who calls you: for a little leaven corrupts the whole mass; I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will think nothing else; but whoever is troubling you will bear the judgment, whoever he may be. (Gal. 3:1-3 and parts of Gal. 5:9-10) But with such persons, having been destroyed by the deceit of the ancient enemy in the death of the soul, let us see what follows:

9:62 And Jonathan withdrew, and Simon, and those who were with him, etc.

What does it mean that Jonathan, when Bacchides caused an uproar, gathered himself with his men into Bethbessen, which is in the desert, and rebuilt its ruins, strengthening it, if not that holy preachers, when they see the power of persecutors prevailing so that they cannot go out openly with the word of preaching, for a time withdraw into hidden places, so that there they may devote themselves to fasting and prayers, and whatever, through carelessness while mingling with the crowds, had slipped back in the certainty of their own life, may, being set apart through diligent good study, be renewed again in full? For Bethbesse is interpreted "house of the flowering mouth." For the mouth blossoms when it resonates with prayers and psalmody and the hymns of God its companion. This also appears to be what the Lord commands the disciples in the Gospel, when he says: "When they persecute you in one city, flee into another" (Matt. 10:23). Therefore the Truth himself, when the Jews were plotting to kill him, no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went into a region near the desert, into a city called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples (Jn. 11:54); and elsewhere it is read that he went out to the mountain to pray, where he spent the night in the prayer of God (Luke 6:12). Therefore also Paul and Barnabas, when they were preaching the word of God in Iconium (Acts 14), and an assault was made by

the Gentiles and Jews with their rulers, to mistreat them with insults and stones and to stone them, understanding this, fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the whole region round about, and there they preached the gospel. But the hatred of the ancient enemy allows no place in the world to become safe from ambushes. Therefore also Bacchides leads an army against Bethbessen to attack it, and does not allow the worshippers of God to live in peace.

9:65 And Jonathan left his brother Simon in the city and went out into the region, etc.

What does it mean that Jonathan left his brother Simon in the city and himself went out into the region to pursue his adversaries, if not that holy teachers labor inwardly at the virtues, and yet outwardly do not cease to fight against enemies with the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit? But these enemies of the Church are not uniform; rather, they are many through the various kinds of persecutions: Jews, pagans, heretics, and schismatics, as well as false Christians, who manufacture disasters to harm the good, as has been shown above. This is also not inappropriately set forth by the meanings of the names themselves in their interpretations. For Odaren means "his generation," and Phaseron means "confusion." Therefore, through Odaren and his brothers those can be indicated who, under the unity of Catholic confession, pretend that the same hidden mystery belongs to the good and the simple, yet by their evil deeds show themselves to be different from their company; of whom the Apostle says: "They profess that they know God, but in deeds they deny Him" (Titus 1:16). Through Phaseron, however, the others are designated who differ from the unity of the Church not only in religion but also in the profession of faith, and such people never cease to prepare schisms, quarrels, and calamities for true Christians, but their

conspiracies and deceits are turned back upon themselves by spiritual leaders, and they do not allow the soldiers of Christ to be harmed by their frauds.

9:72 And he turned and went back to his own land, and no longer continued to come into his borders, etc.

With the storms of war ceasing, Jonathan goes out to Michmash, and dwelling there he judges the people and exterminates the wicked from Israel; because, when the wars of the wicked have been quieted, holy preachers strive to restore what previously, on account of the impending storms of battles, was proclaimed concerning the morality of their subjects, but they also in every way labor that, by good morals, they may render to their Creator the due of just service. For Michmash, historically, is a large village, which to this day is shown within the borders of Aelia, retaining its ancient name, and distant nine miles from it, near the village of Ramah. For Michmash is interpreted "village of the tribes" or "decree," by which, namely, the holy Church is designated, where God is diligently served every day, and where, according to the decrees of the law of God, just judgments are carefully carried out by learned members of the faithful, and the wickedness of the perverse is utterly exterminated from the true Israel.

Chapter 10

Alexander kills Demetrius and takes as wife the daughter of King Ptolemy. About the glory of Jonathan, who captures Apollonius, and to whom Alexander sends a golden ornament.

10:1 And in the one hundred and sixtieth year Alexander, the son of Antiochus, who was surnamed the Noble, went up and seized Ptolemais, etc.

By Antiochus the Noble he means the one whom the Greeks call Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus the Great, about whom more is related above.

10:2 And King Demetrius heard of it and assembled a very large army, etc.

About this war between Demetrius and Alexander, as Pompeius Trogus and his abbreviator Justin relate it, it does not seem unreasonable to consider their account. For therefore it is written in the Epitome of the same Pompeius Trogus, book thirty-five: "Demetrius, after seizing the kingdom of Syria, thinking that peace was dangerous for the newness of his rule, decided to increase the strength of his kingdom and to enlarge his resources through wars with his neighbors. And so, hostile to Ariarathes, king of Cappadocia, because he had rejected marriage with his sister out of contempt, he received in supplication Ariarathes' brother Holophernes, who had been unjustly driven from his kingdom, and, rejoicing that an honorable pretext for war had been given him, resolved to restore him to his throne. But Holophernes, with ungrateful spirit, having made an agreement with the Antiochians, who at that time were offended with Demetrius, conceived the plan of driving him from the kingdom by which he was being restored. When Demetrius learned of this, he spared Ariarathes' life, lest he be freed from fear of a neighboring war, but ordered that he himself be seized and kept in custody at Seleucia; nor were the Antiochians, frightened by this judgment, discouraged from revolt. And so, with the help both of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, and Attalus, king of Syria, he sought to recover by arms a kingdom as though it were his paternal inheritance; and,

that nothing should be lacking in insult, the name Alexander was given to him, and he was said to have been born of King Antiochus. So great was the hatred of Demetrius among all, that his rival received by common consent not only royal power, but also nobility of lineage. Therefore Alexander, in a remarkable change of fortune, forgetting his former disgrace, and armed with the forces of almost the whole East, wages war against Demetrius, and, having defeated him, strips him of both life and kingdom. Yet Demetrius did not lack courage in resisting the war. For at first he put the enemy to flight, and, when the kings renewed the war, he slew many thousands in Mysia; and at the last, still with unconquered spirit, he fell fighting most bravely among the bravest. At the beginning of the war Demetrius had entrusted two sons to a certain host of his, together with a great weight of gold, so that they might be removed from the dangers of war and, if fate so decreed, be preserved for avenging their father. Of these, the younger, Demetrius, having passed the years of puberty, when he heard of Alexander's luxury, Alexander whom unexpected riches and the adornments of another's good fortune, as if he were captured, kept idle in the palace among a crowd of harlots, attacks him, with the help of the Cretans, while he is unsuspecting and fearing no enemy. The Antiochians also, intending to correct their old offence against his father by new services, surrender themselves to him; and the soldiers, too, stirred by favor toward the youth, preferring the obligation of their former oath to the arrogance of the new king, transfer their standards to Demetrius. And therefore Alexander, destroyed by fortune with no less violence than he had been exalted by it, is defeated and killed in the first battle, and paid the penalty to Demetrius, whom he had slain, and to Antiochus, whose lineage he had falsely claimed."

10:7 And Jonathan came to Jerusalem, etc.

With Demetrius offering peace by letters, Jonathan, dwelling in Jerusalem, began to renew the city; for although persecutors sometimes terrify the faithful with threats, and at other times encourage them with flatteries, nevertheless holy teachers continually devote themselves to spiritual edification and renew the city of the Church, so that its enemies may be able neither to break in by force nor to deceive it by fraud. Therefore it is said that Jonathan ordered Mount Zion to be fortified on all sides by the workers with squared stones, because the preachers of the Gospel especially strive to surround the camp of the Church with holy and strong men, whom the squared stones signify, so that there may not easily be an opening for enemies to attack the holy city: for every object that is four-sided is accustomed to stand firm, however it is turned. To this figure the hearts of the elect are likened, who have learned so to stand in the firmness of faith that, when any adversity arises, not even death itself can cause them to bend from the uprightness of their condition. By Bethzur, which is interpreted "house of the strong," the Church is sometimes signified, and sometimes Holy Scripture, in which the strong, that is, holy teachers and apostolic men, are seen to dwell; but just as in the present Church both good and evil are found until the net of the Lord, drawing good and bad fish to the shore (Matt. 13 47-50), that is, to the end of the world and to the judgment of final separation, brings them, so Holy Scripture also has devout readers, who search it with a catholic understanding, and corrupt ones, who, by bending it to their own perverse sense, try to corrupt it. Therefore the Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, says: "All Scripture, inspired by God, is useful for teaching, for refutation and correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17.). But evil men and impostors grow worse and worse, going astray and leading others into error. Therefore also the prince of the apostles says that the unlearned and unstable distort the sacred Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:15). Therefore, with

the persecutions of the pagans having ceased outwardly, up to now heretics and schismatics are raging inwardly against good Catholics, because they have abandoned the law of the Lord and have refused to keep the way of truth. Accordingly, Bethzur is said to become for them a refuge, because whatever they have planned with wicked understanding, or expressed in perverse speech, they strive to confirm it wholly by testimonies of Holy Scripture not rightly understood.

10:15 And King Alexander heard the promises that Demetrius had promised to Jonathan, etc.

As the kings of Syria and Egypt, struggling for the kingdom, each sought the help and friendship of Jonathan, I think nothing else is signified than this: that all carnal people, proud, greedy, and pleasure-loving, although they are always at odds with one another and can in no way firmly keep a settled peace and treaty, nevertheless sometimes, when they perceive the freedom and harmony of Holy Scripture or of the Holy Church, show it honor; because they venerate in it the gift which they do not see themselves as possessing, and some desire to have its friendship or to be helped by its timely comforts, so that through prayer and the pursuit of virtues they themselves may be improved.

10:67 In the one hundred and sixty-fifth year Demetrius, the son of Demetrius, came from Crete into the land of his fathers.

What is signified by Apollonius, the governor of Coelesyria, whom Demetrius sent with an army into Judaea, if not the officers and ministers of earthly power, to whom it is entrusted by their masters to wage war against the faith of Christ and to compel his confessors to blaspheme? These men, unjustly confident in the

numbers of their own people and exalting themselves in the help of the proud, mock Jonathan because he exercises authority in the mountains together with the holy teachers; they scoff at the hope they have in help from on high and provoke them into the plain, that is, to earthly desires and worldly pleasures, so that they may more easily overwhelm them while they move in the depths. For broad is the way that leads to death, and many there are who enter through it (Matt. 7:13).

But Jonathan and Simon, with ten thousand men, engage in battle against Apollonius and his camp; and, overcoming him, they lay him low, just as the holy preachers of Christ, having joined to themselves a number of the faithful who duly keep the commandments of the Decalogue, fight unwaveringly against the persecutors of the faith, and, with divine help for their faith, conquer and defeat all their enemies who devise evil against them. For Joppa, which is interpreted "beauty," rightly signifies the world, whose appearance seems beautiful to carnal people, because they desire to satisfy the cravings of their flesh; indeed, it is there that Jonathan storms the garrison of Apollonius, where the crowd of teachers, by the truth of the Gospel, crushes and utterly defeats the empty philosophy of the world and its followers; and that same company of holy preachers also fights against Azotus, which is interpreted "paternal fire," when it seeks to extinguish in people the desire for earthly things. But the armies of Apollonius flee into Azotus to Dagon, their idol, in order to secure their freedom, just as unbelievers seek protection from the demons whom they worship in their superstition. For Dagon is interpreted "fish of sorrow," signifying the Devil, who, lurking in the sea of this world, strives to deceive all whom he can; but Jonathan sets Azotus and the temple of Dagon on fire, and kills with the sword those who fled into it, because the holy teachers, once the idols have been destroyed by the fire of anathema, likewise condemn the Devil and the love of the world to eternal punishment, and slay

idolaters with the sword of the divine word, because they proclaim the punishment that will follow them into Gehenna.

10:85 And there were those who fell by the sword together with those who were burned, eight thousand men, etc.

By means of the number eight, both spiritual circumcision and the day of resurrection, as we have often said, are indicated; and there all who here are not circumcised by the sword of the divine Spirit are handed over to punishment.

10:86 And from there Jonathan moved the camp, etc.

Jonathan advanced the camp and arrived at Ascalon, just as the preachers of the saints arrange the equipment for virtuous combat to overthrow the errors of the nations and to convert them themselves to the faith of Christ; whom those nations receive with devotion, when they gladly render obedience to them in the Gospel. Therefore it is rightly added in common.

10:87 And Jonathan returned to Jerusalem, etc.

For when, as the teachers of the New Testament preach, the Gentiles behold the happiness of those who believe in faith in the word of God, they immediately return to the Church of Christ to give thanks to God, so that they may offer worthy praises to Him, by whose grace they have received this gift over which they exult with great rejoicing.

10:88 And it came to pass that Alexander, when he heard these words, etc.

What does it mean that Alexander, on hearing of Jonathan's deeds, went further and glorified him by giving him royal adornment, if not that the rulers of the nations, recognizing the greatness of soul and strength of the Church, render to her the honor of royal dignity, because they truly know that she is the Bride of the heavenly King? They grant her cities as possessions, they who hand over to her the dwelling within their borders.

Chapter 11

Ptolemy rises up against Alexander and Alexander is killed. The treaty with Jonathan is confirmed. Tryphon sets up Antiochus, the son of Alexander, against Demetrius, who is saved with Jonathan's help, etc.

11:8 But King Ptolemy held dominion over the cities as far as coastal Seleucia, etc.

Ptolemy Euergetes, who reigned in Alexandria after Ptolemy Philometor, as the books of chronicles attest, gave his daughter in marriage to Alexander, son of Bala, king of Syria. Later, when hostility arose between himself and his son-in-law, he took her away and gave her in marriage to Demetrius, son of Demetrius, together with the kingdom he had taken from Alexander, which Scripture now seems to be recalling.

11:20 In those days Jonathan gathered those who were in Judea to attack the citadel that is in Jerusalem, etc.

What does it mean that Jonathan attacks those who were in the Jerusalem citadel by means of those who are in Judea, if not that holy teachers attack the stubbornness of those who, relying on the exaltation and pride of their hearts, dare to resist the divine

commandments? Against these he constructs many engines, because by various discipline and the diverse teaching of the Scriptures they strive to conquer them and to summon them to humility. But just as then certain men, enemies of their own people, wicked men, went to the king accusing Jonathan, so also now those who do not wish to accept ecclesiastical discipline hate those who try to take away their wickedness, accusing them before the powers of this world, so that they may turn them into hatred and stir up persecution against them; but they do not prevail, because God is their helper and protector, and has delivered them from all their tribulations.

11:28 And Jonathan asked the king to make Judea exempt, etc.

By "toparchies," that is, the leadership of villages or towns, he refers to those places which Demetrius added to Judea from the kingdom of Samaria, about which he relates in what follows, that is, Lydda and Ramatha. For Lydda is a city of Palestine situated on the shore of the great sea, and Ramatha is a city of Samaria, about which it is written in the Book of Kings (1 Kings 1). Therefore, by the right of friendship, King Demetrius, granting exemption to Jonathan, added the aforesaid cities to Judea, sending the assessment of tithes and taxes, and the tracts of saltworks, in which the production of salt was owed to the state; and likewise he forgave other debts which were imposed with royal pomp, and, in accordance with the agreement made with Jonathan, he remitted them all.

11:39 Tryphon, moreover, had previously been one of Alexander's party, etc.

But how Demetrius came to experience the hatred of his own army Pompeius Trogus shows, saying: "After recovering his father's kingdom, Demetrius himself, corrupted by the success of his affairs, slipped in his youthful vices into laziness, and he experienced among all people as much contempt as his father had previously drawn upon himself in hatred through his arrogance. And so, when cities everywhere were breaking away from his rule, he resolved to wage war on the Parthians in order to wipe out the stain of his laziness. The peoples of the East were not unwilling to see his arrival because of the cruelty of Arsaces, king of the Parthians, and because, being accustomed to the ancient empire of the Macedonians, they bore with anger the arrogance of the new rulers. Therefore, when he was aided by the support of the Persians and other neighboring peoples, he moved the Parthians, laying waste to them in many battles. At last, however, being deceived under the hoax of peace, he was captured and led through the streets of the cities to the peoples who had deserted him, and he was displayed as a mockery of misplaced favor; then he was sent into Hyrcania, where he was treated kindly and maintained according to his former rank."

11:41 And Jonathan sent to Demetrius requesting that he drive out those who were in the citadel, etc.

What does it mean that Jonathan asks King Demetrius to expel those who were in the citadel of Jerusalem and in the strongholds, who also were attacking Israel, while on the contrary Demetrius asks him for help against his enemies, if not that holy teachers request from the rulers of the nations and from all people the overthrow of error and pride, and they in turn similarly ask from the holy teachers the support of doctrine and prayer for overcoming spiritual enemies? For neither order is able rightly to bring to completion the effect of its ministry without the assistance

of the other, since neither can the holy teachers obtain the merit of winning souls without the conversion and obedience of their subjects, nor can the subjects themselves merit salvation without the teaching and instruction of their masters; for each order, as has been said above, is strengthened by the other and enlightened by the other. Therefore Paul says to the Thessalonians: Then we live, if you stand firm in the Lord, because we rejoice on your account before our Lord: (1 Thess. 3:8) and to the Corinthians: We are, he says, your glory, just as you are ours on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1:14).

11:49 And those who were from the city saw that the Jews had taken the city as they wished, etc.

That the Jews were gaining victory over their enemies and were compelling them to ask for peace and to give them their right hands signifies that the strength of the holy Church surpasses all its enemies; and whether it causes them, through a wholesome way of life, to yield, or justly punishes those who continue in their stubborn contempt, this is because it has received from its Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, the power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the strength of the enemy (Luke 10:19), of which, speaking elsewhere in the Gospel to his apostle Peter, he says: You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Matt.16:18).

11:51 And the Jews, he says, ***were named in the kingdom.***

Because the confessors of Christ appear glorious throughout the whole world, yet the holy men do not credit this glory to themselves, but to their King, that is, to God, the giver of all good things. Therefore it is also added:

11:51 They returned to Jerusalem bearing much spoils.

The Psalmist shows that he renders such thanks to God, saying: "I have proclaimed your righteousness in the great congregation; behold, I will not restrain my lips" (Ps. 40:9). Therefore in the Church all the faithful who bear the spoils of virtues return, so that they may give praise to God, since they credit the victory they have obtained not to their own strength, but to divine grace, saying with the Prophet: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your mercy and your truth" (Ps. 115:1).

11:52 And King Demetrius sat upon the throne of his kingdom, etc.

That Demetrius repaid Jonathan with evil for his benefits signifies carnal fools, who, when advice is given them for their salvation, do not repay their backers according to the benefits owed, but according to the wicked counsels of their hardened heart. For whatever is done for their advantage, they regard it entirely as harmful, and, stirred by the rod of envy, they choose to serve their own most wicked will.

11:60a And Jonathan went out and passed beyond the river through the cities, etc.

By Jonathan's passing beyond the river we can understand the preaching of the word to those who have not yet been cleansed by the baptism of Christ, because holy preachers sometimes summon the Gentiles to sacred baptism, and sometimes stir up the faithful to the advancement of virtues. When therefore Jonathan returns across the river, the army of Syria comes to him as help, because when the apostles had passed over from the Jews to the preaching

to the Gentiles, immediately many from among the Gentiles came to the faith and baptism of Christ, who were helpers to the holy preachers in the Gospel of God, so that they might lead pagans to belief. ***He went on to Ascalon,*** which is interpreted "suspended" or "shameful fire," ***and they came out from the city to meet him with honor. (11:60b)*** When those who had been serving worldly ambition heard the word of God from the holy preachers, they immediately, having abandoned worldly greed, hurried to the obedience of the Gospel.

11:61 And he went to Gaza and besieged it, and those who were in Gaza shut themselves in.

By Gaza, which is interpreted "strength," is signified the stubbornness of unbelievers, in which the deceived minds of the wicked are enclosed, because they do not consent to yield to the truth. Jonathan overwhelmed it and burned the cities around it, just as the teachers of Christ on every side pressure the faithless with the testimonies of Holy Scripture and, by defeating the schemes of their errors, lay them waste. Therefore the people of Gaza asked Jonathan to grant them right hands, and he received their sons as hostages, sending them to Jerusalem: when the stubbornness of the proud has been overcome and they are no longer able to resist the truth for long, they beg the teachers of the Church to grant them the bonds of peace, and they hand over their sons to them as hostages, that is, the pledges of their erroneous faith, namely to renounce it and to submit in obedience, they promise this to the Church, so that a sure hope may be given that their way of life will be converted to the faith.

11:63 But when Jonathan heard that the leaders of Demetrius had broken faith in Kadesh, which is in Galilee, with a large army, wishing to remove him, etc.

The leaders of Demetrius, who broke faith in Kadesh of Galilee, can not inappropriately be understood as secular powers, which, although they are counted among the faithful because of the catholic confession, this is what Kadesh, which is interpreted as "holy" or "changed," and Galilee, that is, "wandering made," express figuratively, often nevertheless devise deceit of this kind, denying the grace of the heavenly kingdom. Jonathan meets them, because it is necessary that the zeal of holy teachers confront such people, lest they carry out in deed the fraud which they plan in their hearts. Yet he left his brother Simon within the province so that he might protect it from within against the disrespect of unruly men: so also holy preachers, although they sometimes go forth to regulate the affairs of the world and to restrain the attacks of the undisciplined, nevertheless in no way cease to order the ministry of their life within the Church; but they always have there those who preserve regular discipline in all things, so that just as they are useful in externals, so they may be found wholesome everywhere.

11:65 And Simon advanced to Bethsura and was surrounding it, etc.

What is signified by Bethsura, if not the reading of the Holy Scriptures? For Bethsura is interpreted as "house of the strong," and the sacred Scripture can rightly be called the house of the strong, because there those who are strong and most heroic always dwell by speaking and acting well, they who, together with the Psalmist, meditate on the law of the Lord day and night (Ps. 1:2). For in this house at times heretics seem falsely to dwell, when they are found to read the Scriptures but not at all to understand them.

Therefore it is said that Simon besieged Bethsura for many days and captured the city and drove out the wicked inhabitants from it, and they placed a garrison there; because holy teachers have this chiefly as their endeavor and strive with all their might to overcome heretics, by destroying their false opinion and wresting the Scripture of the law of God from their hands. Placing a garrison in it, that is, devout examiners and meditators on divine wisdom, who strive to understand correctly and to set forth accordingly the divine word.

11:67 And Jonathan and his camp pitched by the water of Gennesar, etc.

What does it mean that Jonathan pitched his camp by the water of Gennesar, except that the company of holy preachers, inflamed by the Spirit of God, prepares to oppose worldly waves in the persecutions of the faithful? They say that the lake of Gennesareth is the same as the Sea of Galilee. But the Sea of Tiberias takes its name from the nearby city, which was formerly called Gennessar, but rebuilt by Herod the Tetrarch and named Tiberias in honor of Tiberius Caesar. Moreover, Gennesar is named from the nature of the lake itself, since it is said that, with its rippling waters, it raises a breeze from itself for itself, and is therefore called in Greek "as if generating a breeze for itself." For the water is not spread out motionless in the manner of a pond, but is stirred by frequent blowing of winds, sweet to the taste and suitable for drinking. Yet, by the usage of the Hebrew language, every gathering of waters, whether fresh or salty, is called a sea. This lake, with the Jordan flowing through it, extends one hundred and sixty stadia in length and sixty in breadth. Since therefore the lake or sea represents the present age, our Jonathan, with his own men, hurries to resist the chaos of the world and strives to keep watch before dawn in the field of Asor; that is, he carefully takes heed to watch diligently

against the ambushes of the Devil. For Asor is interpreted "arrow of light," and the Apostle, writing about the same apostate angel, says: "For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Therefore it is no wonder if his ministers are transformed as though they were ministers of righteousness. There foreigners, meeting them in the plain, lay ambushes in the mountains: because both evil spirits and perverse men, in the luxury or pride of this present life, or in worldly desires, strive to seduce whomsoever they can; against whom it is necessary that the soldiers of Christ run in opposition and fight bravely with them, lest perhaps they agree to their persuasions and be dissolved by pleasures and allurements. But when the battle was joined, all those who had been on Jonathan's side fled,

11:70 and none of them remained except Mathathias, son of Absalom, and Judas, son of Calphi,

commander of the army; because, sadly, many of the clergy are overthrown by ambition and the pleasures of this world. Therefore in the Gospel parable the Lord says (Luke 8:14) that the thorns which sprang up choked the crop, that is, riches and a life of pleasure choked the crop so that it did not bear fruit. Yet Mathathias, whose name is interpreted "gift of God," and Judas, that is, "one who confesses," stand firm with Jonathan, because those who are enlightened and strengthened by the gift of God, and by believing rightly and acting well are truly confessors of God, these persevere in the camps of the Church and press the enemy hard, until they crush him and restore again to their former camps their own men who had fled by yielding to the enemy. But let us see what Jonathan did when his soldiers turned to flight.

11:71 And Jonathan tore his garments and put dirt on his head, etc.

For therefore should the superiors and teachers of the Church act when they see their own hiding in battle and turning their backs to the enemies: to tear their garments, that is, to afflict the body with fasts and tears; and to put dirt on their head, that is, to recall to mind the frailty of the body, and to pray to the Lord for their own sins or those of the people, so that he who is almighty may work salvation for the weak and restore them to their former health. And therefore it is fitting to exhort each one to come to his senses from the snares of the Devil, who had been taken captive to his will, and to return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our Lord, for he is rich in forgiving (Isa. 55:7).

11:74 And there fell of the foreigners on that day about three thousand men, etc.

Note that the foreigners are struck down in the number three, because through faith in the Holy Trinity all the enemies of the Church are crushed, overcome, and laid low; and the crowd of believers returns with its leader to the mystical Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all, so that there it may render thanks and praises to our God forever and unto ages of ages.

Chapter 12

Jonathan sends messengers and letters to the Romans and Spartans, puts to flight Demetrius's leaders and their army, and strikes the Arabs. Tryphon, wishing to seize the kingdom of Antiochus, dealt deceitfully with Jonathan and killed him and his army.

12:1 And Jonathan saw that the time was favorable for him, and he chose men and sent them to Rome, etc.

The fact that Jonathan sends letters to the Romans and to the Spartans, and to other places, so that they might renew the treaty and friendship with them which his brother Judas had previously of his own accord entered into, shows that holy preachers ought to have great concern to strive with all their efforts to renew and preserve everywhere the peace which Christ has offered in the world. For the very Son of God, who came to earth to reconcile in His flesh things heavenly and earthly (Col. 1:20), immediately at the beginning of His birth willed that it be sung by the angels: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke 2:14). This same peace the mediator between God and men, now made man, praised to His disciples, saying: "Have peace among yourselves" (Matt. 10:34); and: "My peace I give you; my peace I leave with you" (Jn. 14:27). For by peace and harmony the whole body of Christ is united, governed, and made firm; but whoever does not wish to have peace with his neighbors has no fellowship in the body of Christ, nor can he now achieve to eternal rest, from which he has separated himself through conflict.

12:19 And this has been written, etc.

But how the Spartans were of the lineage of Abraham is not easily found: for it could have happened that Abraham had many sons, apart from Isaac whom Sarah bore to him, from Hagar namely and from Bethsura, as Scripture makes clear, so that from one of them the origin of the Spartans proceeded. But Josephus, making mention of this passage, does not seem, however, to wish to express a true kinship of the Spartans with the Jews, but rather some sort of alliance; he reports a letter written by the Lacedaemonians: "The king of the Lacedaemonians to Onias

Jonathan the high priest, greetings. Reading the Scriptures, we sometimes found that from one [from one stock] the Jews and the Lacedaemonians came into being, and that they had fellowship with Abraham in a friendly manner: it is therefore just, since you are brothers, to send to you and ask for what you judge necessary for yourselves: and we will do the same, and we likewise regard your own possessions as common with ours. The bearer of the letters, Demotites, brings to you letters written on a square tablet, bearing a seal with an eagle carrying a dragon in its claws." The letter therefore sent by the king of the Lacedaemonians contained a text of this kind.

12:24 And Jonathan heard that the leaders of Demetrius had gone out with an army greater than before to fight against him, etc.

What does it mean that Jonathan went out against the leaders of Demetrius, who had come out to fight against him, that he went up to Jerusalem and met them in the region of Amathis, if not that the sacred order of teachers is always ready to do battle against the persecutors of the Church, that is, Jews, pagans, and heretics, and to resist their deceit? He goes out from Jerusalem and meets them in the region of Amathis because, although by inward contemplation and the eye of the mind they gaze upon the loftiness of the Creator and the greatness of heavenly rewards, they nevertheless stand forth for a time to struggle with enemies, yet in no way do they turn aside from the straightness of the truth; for Amathi is interpreted "my truth." But whether they struggle in the clash of disagreement against their errors, or patiently endure their scourges and killings, they in no way abandon the truth of justice, nor do they grant them the opportunity to enter, by deceit, in any way into the territory of the Church. They strive with the greatest

effort to crush at once, at the very beginning of their treachery, their wickedness, and to keep the camp of the Church unharmed.

12:26 And he sent scouts into their camp, etc.

With scouts sent out, Jonathan explores the enemy camp, just as holy preachers, through diligent men, investigate the deceit of the enemies, so that, once their wicked plans are discovered, they may more easily guard against their trickery. And the scouts reported to them that they were planning to come upon them by night: for they prepare to come by night, those who, with a blind heart, devise works of darkness to perform. In opposition, Jonathan orders his men to keep watch and to be armed and ready for battle all night long: for it is the proper role of chosen teachers to instruct their subjects to be ever vigilant and cautious during the entire time of this life, in which, living in uncertainty, they strive toward a certain end. And when the adversaries heard that Jonathan was ready with his men for war, they were greatly afraid and lit fires in the camp and plotted flight: Jonathan pursued them, yet did not overtake them, because he found them already positioned beyond the river. The adversaries fear when the ministers of the Church prepare themselves for spiritual battle; and when they light fires in their camp, that is, they fake the strength of war among their ranks. But in the morning of shining faith, spiritual Jonathan pursues his enemies, yet does not overtake them, that is, he does not bring them to belief, because, seeing them seething in love for the changeable world, he judged them to be beyond recall.

12:35 And Jonathan returned and summoned the elders of the people, etc.

That Jonathan, having returned, set about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and, after taking counsel with the elders of the people,

strengthened the garrisons and built a great height between the middle of the citadel and the city, so as to separate it from the city, signifies the holy teachers who, after having for a time been occupied with wars outside, then inwardly concern themselves, together with spiritual men, with the fortification of the Church, lest it be harmed by internal enemies.

Therefore, those who were from the city of Marche and were lying in wait for the citizens of Jerusalem signify the heretics who, established on the stronghold of their pride, never cease plotting against the Church. Jonathan in his mystical sense cuts them off with spiritual protection, so that they are isolated and neither buy nor sell, having been cast out from the unity of the Church by a most forceful excommunication; neither are their sects to be received, nor is ecclesiastical teaching in any way to be entrusted to them, as to swine most filthy and defiled by every kind of foulness, for the purpose of defiling it. This is expressly contradicted and forbidden by the Lord and Savior in the Gospel, where he says: Do not give what is holy to dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine, lest perhaps they trample them underfoot and, turning, tear you to pieces (Matt. 7:6). Therefore, the Mutus who fell upon the torrent from the rising of the sun, whom Jonathan also restored, signifies those who seemed in the Church to exercise some guardianship of the flock entrusted to them, but, relying on brief things and serving worldly ambition, have slipped into the pleasures of this life and fallen from their proper state. These must necessarily be restored by the zeal of the saints, who strive to bring them back to their former stability by strengthening them with ecclesiastical doctrine.

12:39 And when Tryphon had thought to rule Asia and to assume the crown, etc.

This Tryphon represents the figure of hypocrites and heretics, who act in one way and speak in another, and who undertake something different in their intention. Against him Jonathan went out with forty thousand men, because against such people the doctrine of the Gospel and the observance of God's commandments are necessary: for whoever, according to the teachings of the Gospel, keeps the precepts of the Law, will safely break through the wedges of the enemy.

But the fact that Tryphon by deceit persuaded Jonathan to dismiss the army from himself and to receive him peacefully, and therefore, having deceived him, captured him and killed those who were travelling with him, signifies the ruin of those who do not keep themselves properly, nor maintain watchfulness in the alertness of the heart and the conduct of the body. For these, because they do not heed that teaching of the Gospel in which the Savior commanded His disciples, saying: "Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation" (Matt. 26:41); and again: "Beware," He says, "of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matt. 7:15); therefore the army of such people is rightly overcome and destroyed, because the teaching of the heavenly master is not duly observed by them. Furthermore, in the place of Jonathan, his brother Simon exercises the priesthood and bears the leadership of the people, just as in the present Church, when some depart, others are appointed in their place to hold the office of governance and diligently train the soldiers of Christ in spiritual camps, so that they may be able to resist appropriately all enemies who wage war. But the typical Tryphon, in a similar way, attempts to deceive such people by the fabrications of his words, just as he had deceived his brother, because the ancient enemy never ceases, through himself and his ministers, to lay snares for the worshipers of Christ; yet whoever worthily carries out the office of Simon, that is, of one who is obedient and rightly complies with the divine

commands, can, aided by heavenly help, avoid the snare of all enemies.

But Tryphon, together with Jonathan's sons, whom he had received as hostages, killed them, although he had promised that they would be kept safe along with their father, because the ancient enemy drives all whom he deceives into the death of sin. Indeed, the sons of these, that is, their works, although he previously pretended peace with flattering speech, he will in the end reveal as deserving eternal torment. Jonathan can also bear the figure of the simple ones who are in the Church, whom the cunning deceit of the crafty seems to capture for a time when it afflicts them with bodily losses, but whose souls, persevering in the truth of faith, after the death of the flesh will escape into everlasting light.

Therefore many of them after the end of this present life have deserved to have victorious signs near their tombs, just as it is read of Simon in what follows, that he established a memorial in the tombs of his father and mother and brothers. Moreover, the saints, whom the Savior strengthens as they remain in the simplicity of their innocence, saying: Do not fear those who kill the body and after this have nothing more that they can do to you, but rather fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into the hell of fire (Matt. 10:28); and again: Blessed are you, he says, when men curse you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you, lying, because of me; rejoice in that day and exult, for your reward is great in heaven (Matt. 5:11); and again: Rejoice and exult, he says, because your names are written in heaven (Luke 11:20); of whom the Psalmist says: The just man will be in everlasting remembrance, he will not fear evil tidings (Ps. 112:6-7); these are believed, through death, to be stronger and to live more happily, since their King and Lord himself, Jesus Christ namely, is known to proclaim their triumphs throughout the whole world with shining signs and miracles, so that, near the memorial

of their relics, sight is granted to the blind, hearing to the deaf, walking to the lame, and speech to the mute; healing remedy is provided for hidden illnesses through their prayers, and, on the contrary, in the same place the stubborn and hateful are assaulted by Demetriuses [demons], the shameful and unbelieving are punished, and the demons themselves are tormented with severe pains, in accordance with what they are forced to confess openly with roaring, being tortured.

Chapter 13

Simon is appointed leader in place of his brother: he sends silver and two of Jonathan's sons to Tryphon. Concerning the death of Jonathan and his sons. Concerning the construction of the tomb. Tryphon treacherously kills the young Antiochus and places upon himself the crown of Asia. Demetrius establishes peace with Simon, etc.

13:1 And Simon heard that Tryphon had assembled a great army to come into the land of Judea, etc. 13:27 And Simon built upon the tomb of his father, etc.

Simon constructs, for his father and mother and brothers, out of polished stone a memorial above the tombs, just as holy preachers, by recalling to those present the deeds of the fathers who went before and their glorious end, show them with great authority as examples: for this is what it means to place polished stone before and behind, namely that they strive clearly, by a faithful narrative, to explain to their hearers how they lived before the end of life in regard to doctrine and holy conduct, and what kind of example of the patience of their long-suffering they left to their descendants after their death. Moreover, that holy men are called by the name of father and mother and brothers is shown by the Savior in the

Gospel, saying: “Whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother” (Matt. 12:50). Therefore the Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says (1 Cor. 4:15): “For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel;” and of Timothy he says to the Philippians: “But know the proof of him, that as a son with a father he has served with me in the Gospel.” (Philip. 2:22)

13:28 Simon also established seven pyramids, one facing another for his father and mother and for his four brothers,

with each teacher showing how the light of wisdom of each of the earlier Fathers was conferred on each person, a light which is granted to the faithful through the sevenfold Spirit.

13:29a And he set around them columns, and on the columns coats of arms, as an eternal memorial,

indicating their weakness and uprightness in faith, and how in that same faith they fought against enemies with spiritual weapons.

13:29b And next to the arms, carved ships, which would be seen by all who sail the sea.

For, in this way those righteous who went before have crossed the sea of this present life in the ship of the cross of Christ, toiling amid the waves of this world, and by teaching they strengthen others in the hope of their comfort, so that they may know that just as that aforementioned ship safely brought them to the shore of rest, so also faith in the passion of Christ and in our redemption in

it, if they are willing to have works worthy of that same faith, will grant to them the harbor of eternal salvation.

13:31 But Tryphon, while he was making a journey with King Antiochus, who was a youth, treacherously killed him, etc.

About this Pompey reports as follows: While these things were taking place meanwhile in the regions of Syria, Tryphon, who had endeavored to have himself appointed by the people as guardian of Antiochus, the stepson of Demetrius, after killing his ward, seized the government of Syria. Having long held it, at last, when the favor of his recent rule had faded, he was defeated in war by Antiochus, still very much a boy, the brother of Demetrius, who was being brought up in Asia, and therefore the kingdom of Syria returned again to the offspring of Demetrius.

13:34 And Simon chose men and sent them to King Demetrius, etc.

That Simon sent men to King Demetrius to obtain remission for the region signifies, if I am not mistaken, that holy Church sends its preachers to the rulers of this world, so that by the word of faith it may win them to itself and bring to nothing the figurative deeds of Tryphon, that is, of heretics and schismatics, and crush by the rigor of external powers their pride, on account of which they were unwilling to submit to ecclesiastical gentleness. To these rulers the messengers also present a golden crown and peace, which they say is an ornament made entirely from golden rings according to the custom of the province: with these they promise, for the good contest of eternal life, a crown, and, for the timely support by which they help the churches through their edicts and acts of protection, heavenly rewards. Therefore in general.

13:43 In those days Simon advanced to Gaza and surrounded it with camps, etc.

What does it mean that Simon undertakes to attack Gaza, if not that preachers strive to vanquish errors that must be condemned? Gaza, which is interpreted "his strength," signifies the hardness and rigidity of the nations. Therefore Simon builds many schemes against Gaza, when holy teachers employ various doctrinal means of the spirit to capture the fortifications of the nations, so that they may turn them into the saving spoil of their Lord and King, that is, Jesus Christ. In this he struck one tower and took it, when he laid low the pride of the Gentiles and brought their hearts into obedience to the Gospel.

But who were they, and who are those who, with their wives and children, climbed up onto the wall with their garments torn and asked Simon to give them the right hand, if not those who, entangled in the anxieties and desires of this world by its riches, later converted, not tearing their clothes but their hearts through repentance, seek to receive from church leaders the right hands of reconciliation and fellowship? To whose petition Simon, the man of the Spirit, assenting with mercy, does not strike them with the sword of excommunication, but, leading them out from the superstition of paganism, removes their errors by cutting them away, so that he may prepare a fitting dwelling in their sinful hearts for the Lord Christ.

13:44a They had burst forth within the war-engine into the city.

For although the disrespect of the barbarians has indeed tried to escape the Gospel, it has nevertheless been bound and restrained by the truthful testimonies of the law of God.

13:44b And there arose a great disturbance in the city.

When the whole world was shaken by the preaching of the Gospel, for a great disturbance arose in the city when the savagery of the nations was stirred up to persecute the confessors of Christ, so that those who were faithful defenders of the faith and doctrine of Christ became true martyrs.

14:47 And then he entered into it with hymns, blessing the Lord, etc.

So also, when the errors of the pagans have been cast out, with praises of God the holy teachers will enter the assemblies of the nations; then likewise they place there the men who make the law, because by sincere preachings they cause the true worshipers of Christ to be there.

14:48 And he fortified it and made a dwelling for himself there.

As, through the Gospel, they strengthen the Church everywhere with the defense of faith, by residing in its abode, the very teachers, for their devout labor, await the eternal rewards which, for the confession they have made, are to be rendered to them at the end by the judge of the living and the dead.

14:49 But those who were in the citadel of Jerusalem were prevented from going out, etc.

Those who were in the citadel of Jerusalem and were attacking the Jews themselves signify the heretics and schismatics who,

establishing themselves in the fortress of their own pride, stir up disputes and wars against Catholics. Simon forbids them to go out and enter the region and to buy and sell, because the holy teachers, together with the Catholics, order that no communion of fellowship at all be maintained with such people. For this reason many of them perished by famine, because many of them, once they were cut off outside the communion of the Church with anathema, perish through hunger for the word of God and lack of spiritual knowledge. But because, driven by extreme necessity, people of this sort asked that right hands of fellowship be given them by the Church, this agreement is imposed on them by the Church itself: that they abandon their errors, anathematize the wicked sects to which they had previously observed, and cleanse their conscience from all the wickedness of heretics, and therefore they are restored to the communion of the Church. Therefore it is fittingly added:

13:51 And they entered into it on the twenty-third day of the second month, in the one hundred and seventy-first year, with praise, etc.

These numbers, that is, one hundred and seventy-one and twenty-three, are full of sacred mysteries: for the hundredth, in which Abraham begot Isaac, the son of promise, signifies the perfection of life; the seventieth, in which the captivity of the inhabitants of Jerusalem was ended, signifies the remission of sins. But because these things exist only in the truth of the Church, therefore a unit is added to the number seventy. Moreover, the number twenty-three signifies the faith of the Holy Trinity together with the two commandments of love, in which the whole fullness of the Law consists; and the second month, in which it seemed that Passover was to be celebrated for those who were pure with respect to the soul of man, shows the time of grace and the calling of the nations.

Therefore, when according to this wording and the meaning of the mystical numbers victory is obtained by the faithful, that is, when they keep whole, according to the evangelical doctrine, the faith of the Holy Trinity with the two commandments of love, and, having the perfection of life according to their capacity, remain in the unity of the Church in understanding and faith so that they may come to the fullness of remission: therefore then they will rightly enter the heavenly Jerusalem with song and branches of palms, that is, with true praise and sure victory, and they will render various thanks and praises perpetually to their Creator for the salvation and security obtained, because the great enemy has been crushed out of Israel and death, together with its author dead, stands condemned forever. Nor does this sense conflict with the meaning of the following exposition, where it is written that Simon decreed that on this day joy should be celebrated every year, and that he fortified the mount of the temple, which was beside the citadel, and that he himself and those who were with him dwelt there: because at every time of this life the memory of that day is to be reserved in hope, on which, triumphing over death through the grace of our Redeemer, we shall be restored to eternal life.

Since each year we celebrate the somberness of the Lord's resurrection to show that through his resurrection and victory over death we hope both for the resurrection of our own bodies at the end of the age and for everlasting life in the heavenly kingdom, therefore we must fortify the mount of the temple, which is beside the citadel, that is, the incarnation of Christ, which by its own perfection surpasses every height of the perfection of the saints, by holding it with firm faith in our heart and by devoutly laboring in this throughout all the time of our life, both on our own behalf and on behalf of those entrusted to us, or joined to us in fellowship, so that, being joined to his body and united with it, we may likewise, together with him who is the head of the heavenly

kingdom, become heirs. The blessed apostle Peter commends to us the joy and remembrance of that day in his Epistle, saying: But do not let this one thing escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promises, but deals patiently for your sake, not wishing anyone to perish, but that all should turn back to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a great rush, and the elements will be dissolved by heat. Since therefore all these things are to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought we to be in holy conduct and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of the Lord, through which the burning heavens will be dissolved and the elements will melt with the heat of fire? Yet we await new heavens and a new earth and his promises, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, as you await these things, strive to be found without blemish, in peace, and regard the patience of our Lord Jesus Christ as salvation (2 Peter 3:8-14).

13:54 And Simon saw Joachim [Vulgate: John] ***his son, that he was a strong man, etc.***

Simon entrusted to his son Joachim, when he saw that he was a man, the leadership of all the virtues, so as to show that no teacher ought to commit to his son or his disciple the authority and order of ecclesiastical governance unless he has first seen that he is a man, that is, proven in understanding and diligent in the works of virtue. But since above we have said that Simon bears the figure of the holy doctors, he can in this place express the meaning of the prince of shepherds, who has given to the Catholic people the ministry of sacred governance and the knowledge and effect of all virtues, to whom what is written in the following fits most suitably.

Chapter 14

On the loftiness and power of Simon, king of Juda, and on the abundance of peace in those times. Renewing of the friendship between the Romans and the Jews, etc.

14:4a And the land of Judah was quiet all the days of Simon, etc.

It is written in the prophet Isaiah about the Lord himself, the Savior: "His dominion will be increased, and there will be no end of peace. He will sit upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and strengthen it in judgment and righteousness, from now and forevermore" (Isa. 9:7). But his rule and dominion will be upon the throne and over the kingdom of David, which after the Babylonian captivity had been scattered, so that he may establish it and strengthen it, and teach that it is perpetual, lest the promise of God be judged void; and in the psalm the Prophet says: "In his days righteousness shall arise, and abundance of peace until the moon is no more" (Ps. 72:7). For this promise fits no one else but the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus, who for us was made incarnate and, by the obedience of the cross, has been made possessor of heaven and earth; to whom the Father says in the Psalter through the Prophet: "Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession" (Ps. 2:8). All the land of Judah is silent, all the days of Simon, because the land of the Church, from the time of the incarnation of Christ even unto eternity, although outwardly it endures persecutions from enemies, nevertheless inwardly enjoys true peace. To whom the same Savior says in the Gospel: "My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you" (Jn. 14:27), he himself who builds up good things for his people.

14:4b And his authority pleased them, and his glory pleased them on all days.

Indeed, all good things granted by him to the Church are for the remission of sins and the mastery of virtues. Therefore his authority and his glory are pleasing to her, because she has chosen to serve him alone at all times.

14:5 He himself took Joppa as a port and made an entrance among the islands of the sea.

When he had founded for himself a Church with the entrance of faith from the people of the Gentiles, from there he might open to the Gentiles of the whole world the entrance of faith through the Gospel. Joppa is interpreted as "beauty," and what is more beautiful than the holy Church, to which the Bridegroom says in the Song of Songs: How beautiful you are, my friend, how beautiful you are; your eyes are doves' eyes apart from what lies hidden within (Song 4:1)? Therefore he enlarged the borders of his nation, that is, of the Church; he gained possession of the region of the whole world. And he gathered a great captivity. Of him it is written above: Ascending on high he led captivity captive; he gave gifts to men (Eph. 4:8, Ps. 68:18).

14:7a And he took control of Gazara, and Bethzur, and the citadel.

For I have purified what was accomplished through the Gospel, bringing the Lord, whom I subdued, back to what is his own and removing the uncleanness of the sinner and of vices, cleansing it by the washing of regeneration.

14:7b And there was no one who could resist him.

Of whom it is written: In your will, Lord, all things are established, and there is no one who can resist your will. For you made heaven and earth and all things contained within the circuit of heaven; you are the Lord of all (Esther 4:17).

14:8a And each person cultivated his land in peace:

namely, his own body by practicing virtues, or the land of the Church by good works. Each of the saints, according to his strength, cultivates.

14:8b And the earth was giving its fruit.

That is, our flesh likewise brings forth the fruit of good works.

14:8c And the trees of the fields. That is, people, always blooming with the greenness of faith, bring forth the shoots of virtues.

14:9 The elders were all sitting in the streets and discussing the good things of the land, and the youths were clothing themselves in glory and the garments of war.

In the elders we can understand the prophets, apostles, and teachers of the holy Church, who help their hearers with counsel and strengthen them with their words; the youths, however, are the gatherings of the faithful, because, relying on the glory of the confession of Christ, they clothe themselves with the armor of

virtues, so that they may more easily crush the army of their enemies.

14:10a He granted nourishment to the communities.

That is, they devoted sermons and teachings to the Churches.

14:10b He established these to be vessels of fortification,

so that they might preserve the treasure of spiritual wisdom in a pure conscience and an sincere faith (1 Tim. 3:9), which he did so long as the name of his glory was proclaimed even to the ends of the earth, because into all the earth went forth the sound of the preaching of the apostles, and to the ends of the world their words (Ps. 18). Therefore it is said through the prophet Isaiah: The Lord will make the glory of your voice to be heard, and will show the terror of his arm (Isa. 30:30).

14:11a He made peace upon the earth.

For he is our peace, who has made both one (Eph. 2).

14:11b And Israel rejoiced with great joy.

For the righteous will rejoice in the Lord and will hope in him, and all the upright in heart will be praised (Ps. 64:10).

14:12 And each one sat under his own vine and under his fig tree, and there was no one to frighten them.

This is in accordance with what is said in Micah: Each one shall rest under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and there will be no one to terrify (1 Kings 4:25). This is the vine spoken of in the Gospel: I am the vine and you are the branches, and my Father is the vinedresser. Everyone who does not bear good fruit will be cut off and cast into the fire (Jn. 15:1-6). Its fruits are drunk and eaten and gladden the heart of man, and intoxicate the friends of the Bridegroom, and in the kingdom of God they are drunk anew every day. Under the fig tree, however, rests the one who fears no plots, who enjoys the sweetness of the Holy Spirit and is filled with His fruits, love, joy, peace, self-control, patience. Of such a planter it is said, that he who plants a fig tree eats its fruit (Prov. 27:18), who has built such houses and planted such vines, of which the Apostle speaks: I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth (1 Cor. 3:6). He shall eat the labors of his hands, and he who sows in the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life (Gal. 6:8), nor shall he be overthrown by the deceits of the Devil and his henchmen.

14:14 And he strengthened all the lowly of his people and sought out the Law.

The lowly of the people are the saints whom he calls poor in spirit in the Gospel (Matt. 5:3). The works, too, of the people of God will not grow old, but will be renewed and brought to completion, or strengthened every day, so that they may not walk in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit (Rom. 7:6); such a Law our Simon sought out, and he removed every unjust and evil person, since now through holy teachers he excommunicates heretics and schismatics, and at the end of the world he sends all the devout, and they will gather out of his kingdom all scandals (Matt. 13:41).

14:15 The holy one glorified and multiplied the vessels of the saints,

when he taught his Church to preserve the religion of the New Testament in an orderly and fittingly instituted manner.

14:16 And it was heard in Rome that Jonathan had died, and even among the Spartans, and they were greatly saddened, etc.

When Simon received the high priesthood, various nations sent messengers to him, asking for those things that relate to peace. This signifies that, when the apostles and teachers of the New Testament, after the passion of Christ, his resurrection, and his ascension into heaven, were preaching the Gospel in the world, a multitude of nations flocked to the faith and sincerely sought to have peace with the Church.

14:19 Sending letters,

that is, laying open the secrets of their hearts to them through confession—so that, by receiving the words of truth, they might learn from them the rule of justice.

14:22 Bronze tablets as an eternal memorial.

For it is written: “The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance; he will not fear evil reports” (Ps. 112:6-7). Indeed, the metal bronze is long-lasting and ringing; likewise, the friendship and fellowship of the saints possess the surest and brightest condition of remaining.

14:24 After these things, however, Simon sent Numenius to Rome, etc.

Simon, by sending to the Romans a golden shield weighing one thousand minas in order to establish an alliance with them, signifies that holy teachers, in preaching the Gospel to the nations, promise the heavenly kingdom and eternal blessedness, if they are willing to receive the faith of Christ and to keep the evangelical doctrine until the end of life. For the roundness of the shield and the brightness of the gold, as well as the perfection of the number one thousand, through a figure signify the crown of eternal rest, etc.

14:26 And they established freedom for them and wrote it on wax tablets, etc.

Ebul [Vulg., Elul] is the eighth month among the Hebrews, which among the Greeks is called Gorpiaios (Γορπιαῖος), but among the Latins September; yet the sequences of numbers are scattered because of the different beginnings of the year that exist among each people. For the Hebrews, who place the first month Nisan, that is April, in the sixth place above the aforementioned Ebul. But the Greeks, who begin their year from their first month called Aprilis (Ἀπρίλλος), that is, from the Kalends of December, have Gorpiaios as the tenth month. The Latins, however, who in ancient times had the beginning of their year from the Kalends of March, counted September as the seventh month.

14:47 And Simon took it up and it pleased him to perform the office of high priest and to be leader, etc.

“Peribolus” in Greek is called the wall of the courtyard of the house of the Lord, which surrounded the whole temple in a square

all around, as blessed Jerome shows in the Thirteenth Book of his Exposition of the Prophet Ezekiel. Therefore, in a prominent place of the inner court of the house, bronze tablets were set up, on which the priesthood of Simon and his sons had been confirmed in writing. But mystically, the priesthood of Christ and of His sons, that is, of the Christian people, is confirmed in the courtyard of the house of the Lord, that is, in the present Church, as Scripture bears witness, and it is declared to be stable and everlasting among all nations. Therefore is that which is written in the Psalm: "The Lord has sworn and will not repent: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4). And again: "Once," he says, "I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David: his seed shall remain forever, and his throne as the sun before me, and as the moon, perfected forever, and a faithful witness in heaven" (Ps. 89:35-37). It is a common custom to swear frequently so that one may be believed; but God swears once, because He is not changed by any variation of time. We have said that it belongs to His swearing to promise things to come; for he who has no one stronger binds himself to his own authority. And he says "in your holy one," in Christ, who said: "Keep my soul" (Ps.25:20), "for I am holy," "if I lie to David"; if this is taken negatively, as common usage also has it. The seed of Christ are all who have believed in Him with a faithful mind, because in them the future kingdom has been sown, which the harvest to come will show, as He Himself says also in the Twenty-second Psalm: "My seed shall serve Him." (Ps. 22:30) Therefore the saints will remain forever, who persist in an excellent and blessed way of life. Therefore we do not properly say that those remain who are cast out from the kingdom of the Lord. But here the throne of God is to be understood as the faithful soul, in which He truly sits when He has filled it with the illumination of His majesty; for therefore it is written: "The soul of the just is the seat of wisdom." He added, "as the sun before me." For that soul of the just, which we have called the seat of the Savior, was indeed bright. By saying "as the

sun," he makes a comparison with visible things. For if it is great to shine with the light of a creature, it is much better to shine with the light of the Creator. The perfected moon signifies the transformation of the body from corruption into incorruption. For then the nature of our bodies will be perfect when there will no longer be any mortality or corruption; for the moon itself, which waxes and wanes, signifies the changeableness of human flesh, as can be shown in many places in the Scriptures. These testimonies indeed we have set forth from the Psalms, to show that the priesthood of the true Simon is most firm and everlasting.

Chapter 15

Antiochus, son of Demetrius, takes his father's kingdom and writes letters to the Jews. He pursues Tryphon. Simon sent help to Antiochus, and he did not wish to accept it, etc.

15:1 And King Antiochus, son of Demetrius, sent letters to the islands of the sea to Simon the priest, etc.

This Antiochus, who was called Εὐεργέτης, that is, "Benefactor," and likewise "Faithful," was the son of Demetrius Soter, and brother of the younger Demetrius, who reigned in Syria after Alexander Philopator (Philopolus). Now Demetrius Soter, after Antiochus Eupator, son of Antiochus Epiphanes, as the Chronicle of Eusebius and Jerome attests, reigned twelve years, after whom Alexander Philopolus reigned eleven years. After him Demetrius, son of Demetrius, reigned three years; but having been captured by the Parthians, he was restricted in Hyrcania by King Arsacides. After him Antiochus Assidetes [Sidetes], his brother, held the kingdom for fourteen years, and after his death Demetrius was restored again, and thereafter held it for four years. How the succession of the kingdom fell to the brothers Demetrius and

Antiochus should not seem burdensome to the reader if some material from the History of Pompeius Trogus is introduced here, who relates this in Book 30 as follows: “Antiochus, remembering that his father had been hated because of his arrogance and his brother despised because of his sluggishness, so that he might not fall into the same vices, after taking Cleopatra, his brother’s wife, in marriage, pursued with the greatest diligence the cities which at the beginning of his brother’s rule had revolted, and when he had subdued them, he again added them to the boundaries of the kingdom. He also subdued the Jews, who, under Macedonian rule, in the time of his father Demetrius, had by arms vindicated themselves into freedom, whose strength was so great that after this they accepted no king of the Macedonians, and, using domestic rulers, greatly harassed Syria with wars.”

Likewise in Book 38, and in the thirty-eighth year of his earlier narrative, he adds the following: “For Demetrius, as mentioned above, when he had brought war against the Parthians and had been victorious in many engagements, was suddenly surrounded by ambushes, and having lost his army, was captured. Arsacides in Hyrcania granted him not only the royal attire [Arsacides, king of the Parthians, of great and princely spirit, furnished him in Hyrcania not only with royal attire], but also gave him his daughter in marriage, and promised that he would restore to him the kingdom of Syria, which Tryphon had seized during his absence. After the death of this king, when Demetrius had lost hope of returning and could no longer bear captivity, weary of a private life, though wealthy, he silently planned flight back to his kingdom. His encourager and companion was his friend Gallimander, who, after Demetrius’ capture, had come from Syria through the deserts of Arabia, with guides acquired for money, to Babylon in Parthian dress. But Phrahates, who had succeeded Arsacides, pursued the fugitive with cavalry speed, and, taking the shorter routes, overtook and brought him back. When he was led

to the king, not only pardon but also a reward for his loyalty was granted to Gallimander. Demetrius, however, after being severely chastised, was sent back to his wife in Hyrcania, and ordered to be kept under stricter guard. After an interval of time, when trust in him and in the freedmen he had gained gave him courage, he again fled with the same friend as his companion; but with equal misfortune he was arrested near the borders of the king's realm, and being led once more to the king, was removed from his sight as hateful. Then again he was given to his wife and children and sent back to Hyrcania, the city that was his place of punishment, and was presented with such golden ornaments in criticism of his childish lightheartedness. But this kindness of the Parthians toward Demetrius, so mild, was produced neither by the custom of the nation nor by consideration of kinship, but because they coveted the kingdom of Syria, intending to make use of Demetrius against his brother Antiochus, as time or the fortune of war might require."

When he heard this, Antiochus, thinking the war must be seized, led the army, which he had hardened by many wars with neighboring peoples, against the Parthians. But his followers for luxury was no less extensive than for warfare: indeed, many thousands of armed men were followed by three hundred thousand camp-followers, among whom there were more cooks [indeed, eighty thousand armed men were followed by three hundred thousand camp-followers, among whom cooks, etc.] and bakers. There was so much silver and gold that the common soldiers fastened their boots with gold and walked underfoot the very material for the love of which peoples fight with steel. The kitchen utensils too were of silver, and altogether they advanced as if to banquets, not to war. As Antiochus arrived, many Eastern kings met him, entrusting themselves and their kingdoms to him, with curses upon Parthian arrogance. Nor was there any delay for battle. Antiochus, victorious in three engagements, when he had

taken Babylon, began to be considered great. And so, as all peoples streamed to him, nothing remained to the Parthians except their ancestral territory. Then Phrahates sent Demetrius into Syria with a Parthian military base to occupy the kingdom, so that by this means Antiochus might be recalled to Parthia to defend his own possessions. Meanwhile, since he was not able to prevail by strength, he tried everywhere to ensnare Antiochus by plots. Because of the great number of men, the army of Antiochus was divided among the cities during the winter, and this became the cause of ruin. For when the cities saw themselves burdened by the exactions of supplies and the injuries of the soldiers, they defected to the Parthians; and on the appointed day they attacked the army, dispersed among them in ambush, so that they could not bring help to one another. When this was reported to Antiochus, he marched forward with the force that wintered with him, to bring aid to the nearest cities. On the way he met the king of the Parthians, and fought against him more bravely than his army did; but in the end, although they were overcoming the enemy by bravery, he was abandoned out of fear by his own men and killed. Phrahates gave him a funeral with royal ceremony, and, having fallen in love with the maiden, took as his wife the daughter of Demetrius whom Antiochus had brought with him. Afterwards he began to regret that he had released Demetrius; and when he had quickly sent teams of cavalry to bring him back, they found Demetrius already established in the kingdom, fearing this very thing, and after attempting everything in vain, they returned to their king.

With Antioch destroyed in Parthia together with his army, his brother Demetrius, freed from Parthian captivity and restored to [the kingdom], when all Syria was in mourning because the army had been lost, decided to wage war against Egypt, as if his own patriarchal [Parthian] campaigns and those of his brother, in which one had been captured and the other killed, had turned out successfully. And the kingdom of Egypt was to be the price of

Cleopatra his mother-in-law's aid against her own brother. But while he coveted what belonged to another, as usually happens, he lost his own possessions through the defection of Syria. For the Antiochenes were the first, under the leadership of Trypho, to curse the king's arrogance, which had become intolerable through his association with [Parthian cruelty]; and soon Apamea and the other cities followed their example, and by reason of the king's [Demetrius'] absence revolted from him. King Ptolemy of Egypt also, when attacked in war by this same Demetrius, learned that Cleopatra his sister, with Egypt's wealth placed on ships, had fled to her son and to Demetrius his son-in-law in Syria. He then sent a certain young Egyptian, the son of the merchant Protharses, to claim the kingdom of Syria by force of arms; and with an invented story, as though by adoption by King Antiochus he had been received into the royal family, and since the Syrians refused to tolerate any king, lest they endure Demetrius' arrogance, the name Alexander was given to the young man and vast forces were dispatched from Egypt.

Meanwhile, the body of Antiochus, slain by the king of the Parthians and sent back to Syria for burial in a silver coffin, arrived; and it was received with great zeal by the cities and by King Alexander, to strengthen the credibility of the fabricated tale. This won great popular favor, as everyone believed that the tears shed for him were not insincere. Demetrius, however, defeated by Alexander and oppressed on all sides by surrounding misfortunes, was at last even abandoned by his wife and sons. Left therefore with only a few servants, when he had gone to Tyre, intending to defend himself by the sanctuary of the temple, he was killed as he went out, by order of the captain.

By the foregoing causes, namely that Antiochus claimed from Simon the cities gained by warfare, it is shown that the ancient enemy is always envious of the virtues of the saints and seeks to subject them to his unjust slavery; but Simon, by spiritually

claiming them for himself, declared them to be under his own jurisdiction and the inheritance of his fathers, and that he had no fellowship there, because the possession of virtues belongs properly to the elect, not to the depraved. Therefore the lands of the Canaanites, into which the sons of Israel are brought, had once been allotted to the sons of Shem in the division of the world, which were afterwards, by violence and power, possessed by their descendants through the wickedness of persuasion. In this, the exceedingly just judgment of God is confirmed: for He both drove those men out from foreign places which they had wrongly seized, and restored to these holy ones, as their fathers' possession, that which had been assigned to their lineage in the division of the world; and this is recognized in us with most certain reasoning. For the will of the Lord has by nature assigned the possession of our heart not to vices but to virtues; which, after Adam's transgression, when vices grew disrespectful, that is, the Canaanite peoples having been driven from their own region, are restored together with them on high, by God's grace, through our diligence and labor; yet they are not to be believed to have occupied foreign lands, but rather to have received back their own.

15:38 And the king appointed Cendebaeus as commander of the coastal region and of the cavalry army, etc.

What is indicated by Cendebaeus, the commander of the coastal region, whom Antiochus sends to wage war against the Jews, if not the powers of this world and the persecutors of the Christian religion? Antiochus, namely the mystical Antichrist, sends them with an army of officers and executioners for the destruction of the Christian people, so that they may trample down the true Judea, that is, the Church, and either lead the faithful people into captivity through error or destroy them through blasphemy. Cendebaeus is furthermore ordered to build Cedron. For Cedron

is a brook or valley near Jerusalem, on the eastern side, which John the Evangelist also mentions in the account of the Lord's Passion (John 18:1). Cedron was ordered to be built for this reason: so that the gates of the city might be blocked and the people confined. Now Cedron is interpreted as "sadness," or "grief," or "pain," and it is fitting that he was sent to build Cedron to whom it was entrusted to inflict the pain of punishments upon the confessors of Christ.

Chapter 16

He sent two sons of Simon to wage war against Cendebeus the commander. Judas, the son of Simon, was wounded. Simon is killed together with his sons at a banquet. John, his son, succeeds his brother in the leadership of the priests.

16:1 And John went up from Gazaris and announced it to his father Simon, etc.

We said above that Simon is the chief of the priests, that is, the one who through obedience to the Cross offered himself to the Father for us, in whose house the Son has two peoples of believers, from the Jews and from the Gentiles. To these the Father entrusts the power of war against all enemies and adversaries of the truth, that is, against Jews, pagans, and heretics, and likewise against evil spirits, so that they may defend the Christian faith and protect the true confessors of God.

16:3 Be, he says, ***in my place, and my brothers', and go out and fight for our people, but let help from heaven be with you.***

Who are these brothers if not those of whom Truth itself, rising from the dead, says in the Gospel to the women visiting His tomb: Go, tell my brothers to go into Galilee; there they will see me (Matt. 28:10). Therefore, in the place of Christ and His apostles are the saints, who, doing the will of the heavenly Father, seek both the victory of truth and the salvation of souls; for them there is help from heaven, from Him indeed of whom it is written in the Psalm: Wonderful is the Lord in his saints, the God of Israel, he himself will give power and strength to his people (Ps. 68:35). These chose twenty thousand men of war, because they consider only those fit for spiritual warfare who, in the two commandments of love, become fulfillers and doers of the commandments of God.

16:6 And he brought his camp up in front of them, he himself and his people, etc.

When the commander, on seeing the people anxious about crossing the flood, crossed first, he showed that those who fulfill in the Church the place of the sick [perhaps: of the masters] and the office of teacher ought, by the example of their faith and commitment, to strengthen the fearfulness of their subjects, and with sacred trumpets, that is, with divine doctrines, to rouse them to battle against the enemies. And therefore, the spiritual Cendebaeus and his camp are put to flight, and many from them fall wounded, because, shaken with fear, they finally feel the power of the divine majesty.

16:9 Then Judas, the brother of John, was wounded, etc.

That Judas was wounded in battle and John pursued the enemies signifies, unless I am mistaken, what Paul says: “Blindness in part has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has entered in, and then all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:25-26). For since

the Jewish people delayed in coming to faith in Christ, the Church of the Gentiles vigorously presses its enemies, until by a saving contest it converts them to repentance, or, by proclaiming the punishment to come, chastises those who persist in wickedness. But when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled and their fullness has entered into the faith, then all Israel, that is, the whole Church, from both peoples, through saving confession by faith, hope, and love, will be saved by the gift of Christ.

16:11 And Ptolemy, the son of Abob, was appointed commander in the plain of Jericho, etc.

What is signified by Ptolemy, if not hypocritical and crafty men? These, then, with a insincere submission attaching themselves to good teachers, and pretending devotion, whose power they utterly ignore, generally attain to honor and ecclesiastical dignity, the teachers themselves granting it to them: for this is what it means to be the sons-in-law of the high priest, to take into the power of one's own government those persons whom good teachers were regenerating by water and the word. But when, having received promotion, they begin to be under their own authority, each one, enslaved to his desires, strives by tricks and lies to trip up and overthrow the very authors of his honor; and they likewise destroy their sons and little children, since they spare no person living with them, but by means of money and flattery they subject secular powers to themselves . . . *[Something is missing.]*. . . They harass the Church with hidden snares and with open persecutions.

Nor is it surprising that such wickedness can sometimes prevail in the Church, since we read that the Church itself (so to speak) received the treachery of Judas the betrayer; a magician was baptized by Philip, but was not cleansed of the wickedness of his mind; Julian, the apostate, having been raised up from reader in the Church, persisted in his undertaking of evil as a savage enemy

until the end of his life. The age of this present time likewise has some people of this sort who, although they do not kill their teachers with the sword, nevertheless do not cease to persecute them with envy and hatred.

16:21 And someone running ahead announced to John in Gazara that his father had perished, etc.

John, indeed, after his father had been deceitfully killed, carefully keeps watch against the enemy and puts to death the men who had come to destroy him, because anyone from the number of the faithful who is saved by the grace of God and is wise and concerned about preserving his own salvation, when he learns of the deception of other enemies, strives to guard against their ambushes and to crush their perverse schemes. For simple-mindedness alone is not sufficient for anyone to preserve salvation, but together with simplicity there must also be carefulness. Therefore the Savior in the Gospel says to his disciples: “Be therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves” (Matt. 10:16); and the Apostle says: “Do not become children in understanding, but in hatred be infants” (1 Cor. 14:20). Therefore simplicity ought to be possessed by us so that we harm no one; carefulness also, so that we are not despised by others; nor is there much difference between deceiving someone and being able to be deceived by another.

16:23 And so forth regarding the words of John and his wars, etc.

This John, both leader of the Jews and high priest, was a man of virtue and accomplished many wondrous deeds. He also received the name Hyrcanus, and, requesting from the Romans the right of friendship, was by decree of the Senate listed among their allies.

How Josephus relates about this same Hyrcanus, in order to clarify what is briefly stated at the end of the book of the Maccabees, does not seem inappropriate for us to insert here. After he has recalled some of Simon's victories, he reports his end in this way (Antiquities, Book 13.13–17): "Therefore Simon, having held the leadership of the priesthood of the Jews for eight years, dies at a banquet, ensnared by the plots of Ptolemy, his son-in-law, who, after imprisoning his wife and two sons, sent certain friends to kill John, the third son, whose name was Hyrcanus. But when the attack being prepared was discovered, the young man hurried to the city, relying on the support of a great multitude, both because of the memory of his father's eternal courage and because Ptolemy's wickedness was hateful to all. Ptolemy also tried to enter the city by another gate, but he was driven back by the people, who had received Hyrcanus more promptly, and from there he immediately withdrew to a certain fortress beyond Jericho which is called Dagon."

Hyrcanus, having obtained his father's honor of the high priesthood and, after offering sacrifices to God, quickly set out for Ptolemy, intending to be a help to his mother and brothers alike. Attacking the fortress, he was superior in other respects, but he yielded to just grief: for whenever Ptolemy was pressed, he brought Hyrcanus's mother and brothers up onto the wall where they could be plainly seen, beat them, and threatened to throw them down. Therefore Hyrcanus was moved more by fear than by anger. But his mother, unconcerned by the blows or the threat of death, stretched out her hands and begged her son not to spare her, for she herself, by her own command, would regard the death Ptolemy had set before her as better in her mortal condition, provided that he exacted punishment for the deeds committed against his house. John, however, sometimes thinking of his mother's determination and then listening to her pleas, was driven to fight, but whenever he saw her being beaten and torn, he lost

heart completely and was filled with grief. Because of this, the siege was prolonged for a long time, until the sabbatical year arrived, which it is the custom among the Jews to observe every seventh year as a time of rest, following the example of the seventh days; and during this period, Ptolemy, having gained a respite from the siege, killed John's brothers along with their mother and fled to Zeno, surnamed Cotilas, the tyrant of Philadelphia. Antiochus, angered by what he had suffered at the hands of Simon, led an army into Judea and, encamping at Jerusalem, overwhelmed Hyrcanus there. But Hyrcanus, having opened the tomb of David, who had been the richest of kings, and taken from it more than three thousand talents of money, persuaded Antiochus, by giving him three hundred talents, to abandon the siege, and he was the first of the Jews by his transgressions to begin supporting foreign forces with wealth.

Then Hyrcanus, after learning of Antiochus' death, immediately prepared an expedition against the cities of Syria, thinking that they were left without defenders, as indeed they were. For he captured Medaba, and Samoga, and Sychem, and Garizim with the neighboring places, and the proud race of the Cirtheans [Cuthaeans] who inhabited the places adjoining the temple, built on the model of that which is at Jerusalem. He also captured in Idumaea not a few other cities, and besides these Adoreon [Aoracum] and Marasa [Marisa]. Advancing further into Samaria, to the place where the city of Sebaste, founded by King Herod, now stands, he surrounded it on every side and put his sons Aristobulus and Antigonus in charge of the siege. Since those who were within the city offered no resistance, pressed by the necessity of famine, they came to such a point that they were compelled to touch unfamiliar flesh.

Therefore they summon to their aid Antiochus, called the Spirit of the Lord, who, having complied with his ready will, is overcome

by Aristobulus and Antigonus, and he indeed escapes as far as Scythopolis from the pursuit of the aforementioned brothers.

Then, indeed, when they had returned to Samaria, they drove the crowd back within the wall and, having taken the city by storm, they destroyed it and led away the inhabitants as captives. And since their operations were successful as they withdrew, they did not allow their zeal to grow cold, but, advancing with the army as far as Scythopolis, they struck that city as well and divided the fields between Carmel among themselves. The prosperity of John and his sons aroused the envy of the nations and stirred up rebellion, and many who gathered against them did not cease until, in open war, they were defeated. For the rest of his life, John lived with exceptional good fortune, and after administering affairs in excellent fashion for thirty-three years, he died, leaving five children. He was truly a most blessed man, one who had given no cause for anyone to complain that fortune had wronged him. In short, he possessed three things above all, and in a unique way: he was the leader of the nation, and he was high priest, and, moreover, he was a prophet with whom God spoke, so that he was utterly ignorant of nothing that was to come, for he foresaw and foretold even concerning the two women, his daughters, that they would not remain mistresses of affairs.

He himself held the high priesthood, after his father's death, according to the authority of the chronicles, for twenty-six years. His father, Simon, had been high priest before him for eight years; before Simon, his brother Jonathan held it for eighteen years. Judas, also, brother of Jonathan and Simon, had the high priesthood for only three years, although he had previously waged many wars with the generals of the kings of Syria. After John, indeed, Aristobulus, his son, received the high priesthood among the Jews; wishing also to become king, he took up the emblem of the crown.

Four hundred eighty-four years after the founding of the city of Babylon, he treacherously killed his brother Antigonus, and, when one year of his reign was completed, he ended his life in a miserable death as a friendly fire. He was succeeded in the kingdom by his brother Amiects [Janneus], who is also called Alexander, and he held it for twenty-seven years with such cruelty that, when the people were enraged and he asked them what he could do to win back their goodwill, the reply was: "If you were to die; for scarcely even after your death, having suffered so grievously, would they return to favor, so as to lay aside their hatred against the deceased." Roused by this and, being accustomed to warfare, after killing many, he forced the survivors into a city whose name is Belselel; its capture brought a plague more bitter than usual, through a course of cruelty so savage that out of that number he nailed [crucified] eight hundred in the middle of the city and ordered their wives and children to be slaughtered before their eyes. He watched this while reclining among his concubines, rejoicing amid wine and cups, yet more intoxicated by blood than by wine.

By this single deed he terrified the people more than by war, so that on the very next night eight thousand Jews departed beyond Judea, for whom the end of their flight would be the death of Alexander. When he was dead, his wife Alexandra, who was also surnamed Salma [Salome], reigned in Jerusalem for nine years. Thereafter, when Alexander's two sons, the brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, were fighting over the rule, the Romans found an opportunity to invade Judea. Therefore Pompey, at Hyrcanus' invitation, came to Jerusalem; after taking the city and leaving the temple deserted, he went as far as the Holy of Holies, and he took Aristobulus, the younger brother, with him, confirmed the high priesthood, and made Antipater, son of Herod the Ascalonite, procurator of Palestine. And so Hyrcanus, a man of sluggish spirit, with the help of Antipater, the aforementioned procurator, held the

high priesthood for thirty-four years. Afterwards, however, when Antipater was killed by poison at a banquet, his son Herod succeeded to the kingdom, and he also put Hyrcanus to death. From this point Herod, son of the aforementioned Antipater the Ascalonite and of his mother Cypris the Arabian, received the leadership of the Jews from the Romans; in his time, when Christ's birth was near, the kingdom and priesthood of Judea, which had previously been held by succession over the years, were destroyed, and the prophecy was fulfilled which speaks therefore through Moses: "The ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor the leader from his loins, until he comes to whom it is laid up, and he shall be the expectation of the nations" (Gen. 49:10).

In this period Christ also, whom the Scripture of Daniel foretells (Dan. 9:24-27), reached his end. For up to Herod, the Christs, that is, the priests, were the kings of the Jews, who began to rule from the sixty-fifth Olympiad and the restoration of the Temple under Darius up to Hyrcanus, and to the one hundred and eighty-sixth Olympiad, with four hundred thirty-three years passing in between: which Daniel likewise indicates, saying: "And you shall know and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem until the rule of Christ, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks." These sixty-nine weeks make four hundred eighty-three years, during which the Christs, that is, the priests consecrated by anointing, reigned up to Hyrcanus. When he, last of all, was taken by the Parthians, Herod, son of Antipater, received from Augustus and the Senate Judaea, which in no way belonged to him, and his sons reigned after him up to the latest captivity of Jerusalem, with high priests appointed who were by no means of priestly lineage, nor serving God in continuousness of life according to the law of Moses. Men of low birth indeed, and at different times different men, and some for a single year or a little more, would buy the priesthood from the Romans. All these things the prophet Daniel also foretold, saying:

"And after seven and seventy-two weeks the anointing shall perish, and judgment shall not remain in it, and the people shall corrupt the holy Temple: when the leader comes they shall be slain in the crash of war;" and in the passages that follow: "And upon the Temple," he says, "shall be the abomination of desolations; and until the completion of the time, completion shall be poured out upon the desolation."

Herod appointed as high priest of the Jews a certain Awanulus [Ananelus], summoned from Babylon, and after a short time he gave Aristobulus, the brother of his wife and grandson of Hyrcanus, as successor to him. When he had killed this last one [after a year], he again restored the priesthood to Ananelus. And there was no longer a legal succession in the priesthood, but as the end of the law itself and of the priesthood drew near, everything was thrown into confusion. Herod, moreover, was energetic in warfare and in the governance of the kingdom and the restoration of buildings, but exceedingly unfortunate and of most cruel character. In Jerusalem he built many and great churches; he raised Samaria, once sitting in ashes, from the foundations, and in honor of Augustus he called it Sebaste, and in Paneas, that which is called Panion, he constructed; he founded Caesarea in the name of Caesar, which was previously called Strato's Tower. He also founded Anthedon and Antipatris and Herodium in honor of his father Antipater, and built his own. He very skillfully constructed countless works in each of the cities he ruled.

But between Hyrcanus, who had formerly been priest of the Jews and who had returned from Parthian captivity, and his son, who had succeeded his father in the priesthood, he killed them; he likewise most cruelly murdered his sister, his own wife, together with his two sons already grown, and the mother of his murdered wife, his mother-in-law. For Herod himself, lest he be perhaps reproached as shameful and a foreigner removed from the seed of the Jews, burned all the books in which the nobility of the Jewish

people, preserved in the Temple, was recorded, so that, the proofs having been destroyed, he too might be thought to belong to this lineage, and moreover that he might mix his own offspring with their royal race. From a certain woman of Jerusalem, whom he had taken as his wife while still a private citizen, and from the son born to him, Antipater, he allied to himself Mariamme, daughter of Alexander, granddaughter of Aristobulus, brother of Hyrcanus, who before him had been king over the Jewish people. She bore him five sons, two of whom, Alexander and Aristobulus, he himself killed in Samaria; and not long after he destroyed by a similar crime the mother of these sons, than whom he knew nothing more dear. From them Aristobulus had received by Berenice a son, Herod, whom in the Acts of the Apostles we read was struck down by an angel (Acts 12). Moreover, in addition to those cruel deeds mentioned above, he added this also, that he killed the husband of his sister Salome, and when he had given her in marriage to another man, he killed that man too; and he slew the scribes and interpreters of the divine law by a similar crime.

But when he had learned from the testimony of the teachers about the birth of Christ our Lord, that in the thirty-second year of his reign He was born in Bethlehem, he ordered all the infants to be killed. But after he had completed the thirty-seventh year of his reign, he died miserably, as he deserved, either of the disease of dropsy or of retention of water, and with worms swarming over his entire body. How Josephus relates the end of Herod does not seem inappropriate to insert into this our little work; he reports it in this way (Antiq. 17.9). For indeed he had no slight fever, and he suffered from an intolerable itching over the entire surface of his body; he was also constantly tormented by pains in his bowels, and his feet were swollen as though from the disease of retained water, since the swelling of his belly and the decay of his testicles generated little worms; in addition, frequent shortness of breath and gasping sighs and the contraction of all his limbs exhausted

him, so that those who attributed these things to the Divinity said that such torments were the punishment of sophists. He, however, although he struggled with the tortures of so many afflictions, was still eager for life and hoped for recovery from created remedies.

Finally, after crossing the Jordan, he made use of the hot waters at Callirrhoe, which, flowing into a lake rich in tar, called Asphaltitis, are drinkable despite their bitterness. But there his body, which the physicians had decided should be treated with hotter oil, was immersed in a full tub and so dissolved that, like a dead man, he rolled his eyes as they released. Then, when those who were tending him were thrown into confusion, he seemed, at their shouting, to look around. When his recovery was give up on of, he ordered that fifty drachmas be given to each soldier and that a large sum of money be distributed among the magistrates and his friends.

But when, on returning, he had come to Jericho, he was seized by black bile and was himself almost given over to death; he conceived a monstrous deed: for he ordered that from every village of all Judea the most noble men be gathered and kept in a place called the Hippodrome. Then, after summoning his sister Salome and Alexander, her husband, to him, he said: “I know that the Jews will celebrate my death with festive rejoicing; yet through others I shall be able to be mourned and to obtain very splendid honors at my burial, provided you do what I myself command: these men whom you have in custody, when I have breathed my last, immediately surround them with soldiers and kill them, so that all Judea, which hates me, and every household may weep.” And at the same time, while he was giving these orders, letters from the messengers whom he had sent to Rome were brought in, in which it was indicated that at Caesar’s command Archelaus had been declared intemperate (so) and Antipater condemned to death; it was written that Caesar had

given their father the choice whether he preferred to send him into exile.

Herod, however, somewhat cheered by this report and again overcome by pains, was worn out as his strength was strained alike by starvation and the violence of disease; and therefore, attempting to forestall his fate, he took an apple and asked for a little knife, for he was accustomed to eat it sliced. Then, after looking around to see that no witness would hinder him, he lifted his right hand as though he were about to strike himself. But when Achiabus, his cousin, ran up and restrained his hand, a great wailing at once arose in the palace, as though the king were dead. At this, Antipater, roused and having quickly heard of it, took courage, and, now joyful, was even asking the guards, having promised them money, to release and dismiss him. Their leader not only refused to do this, but also reported it quickly to the king. He, crying out more strongly than the strength of a sick man would seem to allow, immediately sent soldiers, had Antipater killed, and ordered him to be buried without any honor in Hyrcanium.

Then once more he revised his will, and wrote Archelaus, the eldest brother of Antipater, as his successor, but Antipas as tetrarch. After the death of his son and when six days had passed, he himself died, in the thirty-fourth year from the time he had killed Antigonus and seized the throne, and the thirty-seventh year from the time he had been declared king by the Romans; he therefore died in the forty-seventh year of the reign of Augustus. In his place, by decree of Augustus, his son Archelaus was appointed and reigned for nine years, that is, until the end of Augustus himself. For then, when they could no longer bear him and had accused him before Augustus, seeing his brutality, Augustus exiled him to the city of Vienne in Gaul; and, in order to diminish the power of the Jewish kingdom and to tame its arrogance, four of his brothers were appointed tetrarchs in his

stead: Herod, Antipater, Lysias, and Philip, and then afterward Archelaus.

After Archelaus, however, Herod the tetrarch held rule over the people of Judea for twenty-four years, to whom the emperor Tiberius had granted this authority. In his twelfth year, Pilate was sent by him as procurator in Judea, and there he remained for ten consecutive years, almost up to the very end of Tiberius. In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3), likewise the fifteenth year of the reign of Herod, as the historians record, John, the son of Zechariah, preaching in the desert near the river Jordan, testified that Christ, the Son of God, was in their midst. This same Herod, at the urging of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, ordered him to be beheaded at a banquet at the request of a dancing girl, as the holy Gospel clearly shows (Matt. 14).

The Lord Jesus Christ himself then from that point proclaimed to the people the way of salvation, confirming by signs and miracles that what he said was true. Likewise, in the eighteenth year of the rule of them both, Jesus Christ, in accordance with the prophets who had foretold of him, came to his Passion; when, having been presented to this Herod by those sent by Pilate, he was not received in faith but, despised through worldly pride, was clothed in a white garment and sent back again to Pilate, by whom, through the service of soldiers, he was crucified and on the third day rose again from the dead.

Moreover, divine Scripture relates that the beginning of the evangelical preaching started in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, and that Jesus himself spent all the time of his teaching under the high priests Annas and Caiaphas; that is, in the year when the period of their high priesthood began he had started to teach, and he continued until the beginning of Caiaphas's term, within which span scarcely four whole years are encompassed.

Meanwhile, the legal ordinances had by that time ceased along with ambition: for to no one among the Jews was the honor of the high priesthood being granted by right of birth or lineage, but by Roman authority the high priesthood was discussed now on some, then on others, so that they were changed with yearly interruptions. Finally, this same Josephus (Antiquities, 18.4) reports that four men in succession, up to Caiaphas, discharged the office of high priest after Annas, writing this in these words:

Valerius Gratus, after disturbing Annas' priesthood, appointed Ishmael, the son of Bassus; but after removing him not long afterward, he substituted Eleazar, the son of the high priest Annas, in the high priesthood. Yet, after the first year he also removed this man from office, and handed over the duty of the high priesthood to a certain Simon, the son of Camus, who himself did not hold it for more than the space of one year, and then received Joseph, who was also called Caiaphas, as his successor. Therefore, throughout the whole time in which our Lord and Savior is described as having taught on earth, within the span of four years, during which those four successions of high priests that Josephus mentions are recorded, scarcely any of them administered the office for even a single year.

Moreover, Josephus relates how Herod the tetrarch lost his kingdom, saying: Herod the tetrarch having been accused, Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, whom Herod his father had killed, came to Tiberius. Since Tiberius did not receive the accusation, Agrippa stayed in Rome, seeking the favor of certain powerful people; but he cultivated with the greatest attentions Gaius, the son of Germanicus, while Gaius was still a private citizen. One day, amid an sufficient display of banquets at which he was dining with this same Gaius, with his hands stretched out at the end, he began openly to pray to the Lord that, once Tiberius had quickly died, the empire might be given to Gaius. When this was reported to Tiberius, he immediately ordered Agrippa to be

imprisoned; and Agrippa, under great hardship, was held in jail for six months, until the death of Tiberius. But when Tiberius died, after a reign of ten years and three days, Gaius Caesar, succeeding to the empire, released Agrippa from his chains, gave him the tetrarchy of Philip (for Philip had already died), and called him king.

When Agrippa came into power, he stirred up through envy the ambitions of Herod the tetrarch. Herod's wife, in particular, provoked him in regard to the appearance of royal dignity, reproaching him for his agreement and saying that through his refusal to sail to Caesar he was deprived of greater authority. For since Agrippa had been made king from being a private person, how could Gaius hesitate to grant the same honor to Herod by raising him from tetrarch to king? Persuaded by these arguments, Herod went to Gaius, but, having been vehemently rebuked for his greed, he fled into Spain. Agrippa, who had followed as his accuser, also obtained Herod's tetrarchy from Gaius; and therefore, while Herod was in exile in Spain, his wife Herodias departed with him.

Pontius Pilate, the governor in the same year in which the Savior suffered, secretly placed images of Caesar in the temple by night, as Josephus relates, and this proved to be the clear cause of the first sedition and disturbances. Later, spending the sacred treasury, which the Jews call the corban, on the canal of Jerusalem, he provided the seeds of a second treason. But when Pilate reported to Tiberius about the doctrine of the Christians and mentioned certain things concerning the deeds, passion, and resurrection of the Redeemer himself, Tiberius referred the matter to the senate, so that Christ might be received among the other sacred objects. However, when, by decree of the fathers, it was decided that the Christians should be driven out of the City, Tiberius, by an command, threatened death to the accusers of Christians, as Tertullian writes in the Apology *(chapter 5)*. Many senators and

Roman knights were killed by him. Therefore, he condemned the Jews with divine vengeance for the crime they had committed; and Pilate himself, who had served in the office of an unjust judge against the Savior, was in those same times of Gaius tortured by such great and various disasters that it is reported he pierced himself through with his own hand and violently cast off his wicked life. For the minister of so great a crime could not escape unpunished, as we find in the histories of the Greeks, at least in those who write about the Olympiads and compose annual records of deeds for the memory of successors.

Agrippa, the son of Herod's son Aristobulus, after the killing of James the son of Zebedee, threw the apostle Peter into prison (Acts 12) and stirred up a persecution against those who believed in Christ; but he did not escape unpunished. Therefore Luke in the Acts of the Apostles shows clearly, and Josephus recounts it in the eighteenth book of the Antiquities, who reports about him in this way (Antiquities 19.8): "He had completed," he says, "the third year of his rule over the whole of Judea, when he happened to come to Caesarea, which was formerly called the Tower of Strato. There, in honor of Caesar, he put on spectacles for the citizens on what seemed to be a ritual day for Caesar's safety; and when men of the whole province, endowed with rank and means, had assembled there, on the second day of the spectacles, clothed with a garment shining and wondrously woven of gold and silver, at daybreak he came forth to the theater. When he received the first rays of the sun on the fold of his silver robe, the reflected brightness poured forth a doubled light to the spectators from the quivering gleam of the metal, so that the spectacle dazzled their sight through its terror, and by this, the craftsman arrogance falsely claimed for him something beyond what belongs to human nature. Immediately the voices of the flattering crowd resounded, proclaiming honor, but bestowing it upon one whom they said was equal to the rising sun, and from here and there, the flatterers

shouting together declared that he was a god and simply begged that he should be favorable. The people said that up to now we have feared you as a man, but from now on we confess that you are above human nature. But the king did not limit the cheers which was made contrary to right, nor did he shudder at the wickedness of unlawful flattery, until a little later, looking up, he saw a barn owl sitting above his head on a rope. He immediately understood that this was the messenger of his death, whom he had previously known as the messenger of honors. And behold, suddenly a torment seized him with incredible pain in his belly and with swelling. Looking at his courtiers he said: 'See, I, your god, am compelled to change my life immediately; a certain divine power refutes the false words recently bestowed upon me, and I who was just now called immortal by you am already being snatched away into death. But the sentence which God has decreed must be accepted.'"

For we have lived in a way not to be despised, and we have fulfilled the length of days that was considered blessed; and when he had said this, being more violently tormented by the force of the pain, he was at once carried back to the palace, and when it was reported that he would soon die, a huge multitude of every age and sex gathered, and, according to the custom of their fathers, lying upon sackcloth, they prayed to Almighty God for the safety of the king. The whole royal house echoed with weeping and groans, while meanwhile the king himself, reclining in a lofty upper room and looking down, and seeing beforehand with tears them all lying prostrate and bowed to the ground, hardly restrained himself from tears. Tormented by continuous pains of the belly for five days, he violently broke off his life, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign, for he reigned four years under Gaius Caesar, and held Philip's tetrarchy for three years; then, adding that of Herod to himself in the fourth year, and the remaining three years under Claudius Caesar. After Agrippa the

father had held the kingdom of Judaea for six years, his son Agrippa was appointed by Claudius to the kingdom, which he held for twenty-six years, that is, until the second year of Vespasian, when the destruction of the city took place. How Josephus narrates this (Antiquities 20.13), we have determined should be set down in this place. "Claudius," he says, "made Agrippa, the son of Agrippa, king of the Jews; but he sent Flen(s) [Cuspius Fadus] as procurator of the whole province, and also of Samaria, Galilee, and the region called Transjordan." And shortly after he added this: "A most bitter agitation broke out, stirred up by the chief priests against the other priests and the leading men of the populace of Jerusalem, each of whom, complaining, drew together bands of desperate youths who delighted in new laws, and each one of them seemed to be a leader. And, joining themselves in arguments, they hurled insults at one another and pelted one another with stones, nor was there anyone who restrained them; instead, everything was done as though in a city that had no ruler. So the chief priests came into such want that, sending their servants to the threshing floors, they seized the tithes that were owed to the priests; it happened that some of the lesser priests, whose means of nourishment had been seized, perished from hunger: therefore the violence of the agitations confused law and right." Likewise, shortly after he adds this as well: "Sometimes, too, meeting in the midst of the city, they slaughtered one another; especially on feast days, assassins mingled with the crowds, wandering about with daggers hidden, so that anyone singled out by them, if he came near, they killed him; and by a wicked art, when the man whom they struck with a secret wound fell, the very assassins themselves pretended to be outraged against those who committed such deeds in the midst of the city; and in this way their crimes remained concealed, and first of all Jonathan the high priest was killed by them; after him many others were butchered, so that now, by these very deaths, fear of death became more grievous,

while each man, as if always drawn up in battle array, expected to be killed at every moment."

But when Claudius, after completing fourteen years in the imperial office, seven months, and twenty-eight days, died, [Nero] received the empire, which he held for fourteen years, seven months, and twenty-eight days. In his second year Festus, procurator of Judea, succeeded Felix, by whom Paul, in chains, is sent to Rome, remaining for two years in free custody (Acts 24:27). After this he is released to preach, Nero not yet bursting forth into such great crimes as history reports of him. James, the brother of the Lord, after he had ruled the Church of Jerusalem for thirty years (Acts 12), in the seventh year of Nero is slaughtered by the Jews, who took vengeance on him because they had not been able to kill Paul.

Festus, as magistrate of Judea, was succeeded by Albinus, and Albinus by Florus, whose wickedness and greed and other crimes the Jews, being unable to endure, rebelled against the Romans; against them Vespasian, commander of the army, was sent, and he captured very many cities of Judea. Nero, first of all his crimes, also persecutes the Christians, and from among their number at Rome he crucified Peter and killed Paul with the sword. This man, attempting nothing at all in regular military fashion, almost lost Britain. For two very noble towns under Roman rule there were captured and destroyed. Finally, when he was being sought by the senate for punishment, fleeing from the palace, at the fourth milestone from the City, in the suburban estate of his freedman, between the Salarian and Nomentan roads, he killed himself at the age of thirty-two, and in him the whole family of Augustus came to an end.

After Nero, indeed, Galba in Iberia, Vitellius in Germany, and Otho in Rome seized the imperial power: Galba, in the seventh month of his rule, is beheaded in the middle of the Roman forum;

Vespasian forced the Jews, defeated in two battles, to destruction; Otho, in the third month of his reign, [near Bebriacum] fell by his own hand while on a hunting expedition; Vitellius was thrown into the Tiber by the generals of Vespasian. Vespasian, the seventh of the Romans to reign, ruled for eight years, eleven months, and twenty-two days. He, having been proclaimed emperor by the army among the Jews, and quickly entrusting the war to his son, set out for Rome by way of Alexandria. In his second year, Titus, after Judea had been captured and Jerusalem destroyed, killed six hundred thousand men. Josephus, however, with conviction affirms that six hundred [and eleven hundred hundred] thousand men perished by the sword and by famine, and another hundred thousand captives were publicly sold.

Now, in order that such a multitude should be found in Jerusalem, he reports that the feast of Unleavened Bread was the cause, on account of which the Jews from every nation, flocking to the Temple, were shut up in the city as though in a prison; for it was fitting that they should be slain in those same days of Passover in which they crucified the Savior. The whole time is reckoned from the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, and from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel, to the second year of Vespasian and the final destruction of Jerusalem, as forty-two years. But from the captivity which they endured under Antiochus, there were two hundred and thirty-eight [nine] years. Moreover, from the second year of Darius, under whom the Temple was again built, there were five hundred and ninety years. But from the first building of the Temple under Solomon up to its final ruin, which took place under Vespasian, there were five hundred and ninety thousand two hundred [eleven hundred and two] years.